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Wikipedia's Intentional Distortion of the History of the Holocaust

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ABSTRACT

This essay uncovers the systematic, intentional distortion of Holocaust history on the English-language Wikipedia, the world's largest encyclopedia. In the last decade, a group of committed Wikipedia editors have been promoting a skewed version of history on Wikipedia, one touted by right-wing Polish nationalists, which whitewashes the role of Polish society in the Holocaust and bolsters stereotypes about Jews. Due to this group's zealous handiwork, Wikipedia's articles on the Holocaust in Poland minimize Polish antisemitism, exaggerate the Poles' role in saving Jews, insinuate that most Jews supported Communism and conspired with Communists to betray Poles (*Żydokomuna* or Judeo–Bolshevism), blame Jews for their own persecution, and inflate Jewish collaboration with the Nazis. To explain how distortionist editors have succeeded in imposing this narrative, despite the efforts of opposing editors to correct it, we employ an innovative methodology. We examine 25 public-facing Wikipedia articles and nearly 300 of Wikipedia's back pages, including talk pages, noticeboards, and arbitration cases. We complement these with interviews of editors in the field and statistical data gleaned through Wikipedia's tool suites. This essay contributes to the study of Holocaust memory, revealing the digital mechanisms by which ideological zeal, prejudice, and bias trump reason and historical accuracy. More broadly, we break new ground in the field of the digital humanities, modelling an in-depth examination of how Wikipedia editors negotiate and manufacture information for the rest of the world to consume.

KEYWORDS

Wikipedia; Holocaust; Polish nationalism; distortion; digital humanities; nationalism; Public history

Introduction

This essay will show how the English-language Wikipedia, the world's largest encyclopedia, whitewashes the role of Polish society in the Holocaust and bolsters stereotypes about Jews. We will show how a handful of editors steer the historical narrative away from evidence-driven research toward a skewed version of history touted by right-wing Polish nationalists. Throughout Wikipedia's numerous articles on Polish–Jewish

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relations, there are dozens of statements that deviate from historical fact, and which, in the aggregate, perpetuate potent myths about Polish–Jewish relations before, during, and after the Holocaust. We will also explain why it is so difficult to counter the impact of these editors and conclude with some suggestions to rectify this problem.

This essay contributes to the area of Holocaust memory, revealing the digital mechanisms by which ideological zeal, prejudice, and bias trump reason and historical accuracy. More broadly, our study breaks new ground in the field of the digital humanities, modeling an in-depth examination of how Wikipedia editors negotiate and manufacture information for the rest of the world to consume. Quantitative studies researching Wikipedia are plentiful, ranging from big-data analyses of citation patterns to large-scale surveys on editors' gender gap and measurements of Wikipedia's web traffic.[1] While important in their own right, quantitative studies cannot identify Wikipedia's distortions, juxtapose article content with scholarship, or evaluate the intentionality of misinformation. A few seminal studies have taken just such a qualitative approach, each dissecting a handful of Wikipedia articles.[2] Our research, however, examines Wikipedia's portrayal of an entire historical subfield, namely, the Holocaust in Poland.

This study is the first of its kind both in scope and method: we examine 25 public-facing Wikipedia articles (known as mainspace pages) and nearly 300 of Wikipedia's back pages, including talk pages (where editors discuss articles), noticeboards (where editors ask questions and request assistance), diffs (where the system displays the difference between versions of the same Wikipedia page), and arbitration cases (where editors take their disputes). We complement these with interviews of editors in the field and statistical data gleaned through Wikipedia's tool suites. This study lays the ground for researchers in other fields to trace the vast universe of Wikipedia's mainspace and back pages and illuminate the production of digital knowledge.

Why should we care so much about Wikipedia? Most scholars would say that there's no expectation Wikipedia should be reliable in the first place; that's what peer-reviewed scholarship is for. Yet, the importance of Wikipedia is tremendous because of its visibility. Wikipedia is the seventh most visited site on the internet, with 7.3 billion views a month.[3] Its articles show up in over 80 percent of the first page of search engine results and over 50 percent of the top three results. Browser searches yield more links to the English-language Wikipedia than to any other website in the world, and Wikipedia predominates in knowledge panels, the information boxes that show up in Google

[1] Of 1,974 Wikipedia-focused publications listed in the encyclopedia itself, the majority fall under computer science and data analytics. "Wikipedia:List of academic studies about Wikipedia," revision from 08:12, March 7, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:List_of_academic_studies_about_Wikipedia&oldid=1075716512.

[2] See, in chronological order, Pamela Graham, "'An Encyclopedia, Not an Experiment in Democracy': Wikipedia Biographies, Authorship, and the Wikipedia Subject," *Biography*, vol. 38, no. 2 (2015); Brendan Luyt, "Debating Reliable Sources: Writing the History of the Vietnam War on Wikipedia," *Journal of Documentation*, vol. 71, no. 3 (2015); Daniel Wolniewicz-Slomka, "Framing the Holocaust in Popular Knowledge: 3 Articles About the Holocaust in English, Hebrew and Polish Wikipedia," *Adeptus*, vol. 8 (2016); Sangeet Kumar, "A river by Any Other Name: Ganga/Ganges and the Postcolonial Politics of Knowledge on Wikipedia," *Information, Communication & Society*, vol. 20, no. 6 (2017); Henry Jones, "Wikipedia, Translation, and the Collaborative Production of Spatial Knowledge," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, vol. 38 (2018); and Mark Shuttleworth, "Translation and the Production of Knowledge in Wikipedia: Chronicling the Assassination of Boris Nemtsov," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, vol. 38 (2018). "How the Russian Invasion of Ukraine is Playing Out on English, Ukrainian, and Russian Wikipedia," *Slate*, March 1, 2022, https://slate.com/technology/2022/03/wikipedia-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-edits-kyiv-kiev.html (accessed September 10, 2022). Heather Ford, *Writing the Revolution: Wikipedia and the Survival of Facts in the Digital Age* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2022).

[3] "Wikipedia Site Views Analysis," *WMCloud*, https://pageviews.wmcloud.org/siteviews/?platform=all-access&source=pageviews&agent=user&start=2021-02&end=2022-01&sites=en.wikipedia.org (accessed March 14, 2022).

searches, which are visible to users without scrolling.[4] Multiple websites mirror Wikipedia's content and students read it for their college papers; indeed, even judges rely on Wikipedia to rule on cases.[5]

Wikipedia plays a critical role in informing the public about the Holocaust in Poland. The Wikipedia article 'Holocaust' tops the charts with an average of nearly 270,000 monthly views, but even more obscure articles, such as 'Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust,' receive as many as 1,700 views a month (Chart 1).[6] This exposure surpasses that of any monograph or journal article, suggesting that Wikipedia shapes public knowledge about the Holocaust far more than scholarship does. Scholars have been aware of a problem in Wikipedia's articles in this area for some years.[7]

The misrepresentation of Polish–Jewish history is nothing new, and far predates the online encyclopedia or indeed the internet. For decades after the end of the war, the dominant approach in Poland held that most Poles were disgusted by German antisemitism, and that many risked their lives to save their Jewish neighbors. Research, especially from the last three decades, shows otherwise. Some Poles did help Jews, at great risk, but antisemitism existed among all swaths of Polish society, including the Polish underground, and anti-Jewish violence was a common occurrence.[8]

In the 1980s, some Catholic Poles began to concede on the point of their own society's role in the persecution of Jews. 'Yes, we are guilty,' admitted the literary critic and professor of Polish literature Jan Błoński, in a groundbreaking piece in 1987, although even he was unable to admit that parts of Polish society had taken part in the German genocidal project.[9] Soon, scholars of the Holocaust were to go far beyond Błoński's

[4]Nicholas Vincent and Brent Hecht, "A Deeper Investigation of the Importance of Wikipedia Links to Search Engine Results," *PACM on Human Computer Interaction,* vol. 5, no. 4 (2021): p. 2, https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3449078. Nicholas Vincent et al., "Measuring the Importance of User-Generated Content to Search Engines," *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, vol. 13, no. 1 (2019): p. 505, https://ojs.aaai.org/index.php/ICWSM/article/view/3248.

[5]Marte Blikstad-Balas, "You Get What You Need": A Study of Students' Attitudes Towards Using Wikipedia When Doing School Assignments," *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 60, no. 6 (2016): pp. 594–608, https://www.tandfonline.com/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1080%2F00313831.2015.1066428; Sook Lim, "How and Why Do College Students Use Wikipedia?" *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, vol. 60, no. 11 (2009): pp. 2189–202, https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21142. Neil Thompson et al., "Trial by Internet: A Randomized Field Experiment on Wikipedia's Influence on Judges' Legal Reasoning," in Kevin Tobia (ed.), forthcoming in *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Jurisprudence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4174200.

[6]Chart generated by running each article through Pageviews Analysis, https://pageviews.toolforge.org/ (accessed November 14, 2020). Chart data archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish–Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

[7]Jan Grabowski, "Wrzuć brednię na Wikipedię. Polscy nacjonaliści wciskają kit zagranicznym czytelnikom," [Upload Nonsense to Wikipedia. How Polish Nationalists Sell Nonsense to Foreign Audiences"], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, February 28, 2020, https://wyborcza.pl/alehistoria/7,121681,25732654,wrzuc-brednie-na-wikipedie-polscy-nacjonalisci-wciskaja-kit.html (accessed August 30, 2022). See also comments by Havi Dreifuss in Omer Benjakob, "The Fake Nazi Death Camp: Wikipedia's Longest Hoax, Exposed," *Haaretz*, October 3, 2019, https://web.archive.org/web/20191003201543/https:/www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-the-fake-nazi-death-camp-wikipedia-s-longest-hoax-exposed-1.7942233 (accessed August 7, 2022).

[8]See historiographical surveys in Joshua Zimmerman, "Introduction," *Contested Memories: Poles and Jews During the Holocaust and its Aftermath* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 2003), pp. 1–16; Natalia Aleksiun, "Polish Historians Respond to Jedwabne," in Robert Cherry and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska (eds.), *Rethinking Poles and Jews: Troubled Past, Brighter Future* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), pp. 171–72.

[9]In his well-known essay, Błoński wrote: "Yet, when one reads what was written about Jews before the war, when one discovers how much hatred there was in Polish society, one can only be surprised that words were not followed by deeds. But they were not (or very rarely). God held back our hand. Yes, I do mean God, because if we did not take part in that crime, it was because we were still Christians, and at the last moment we came to realize what a

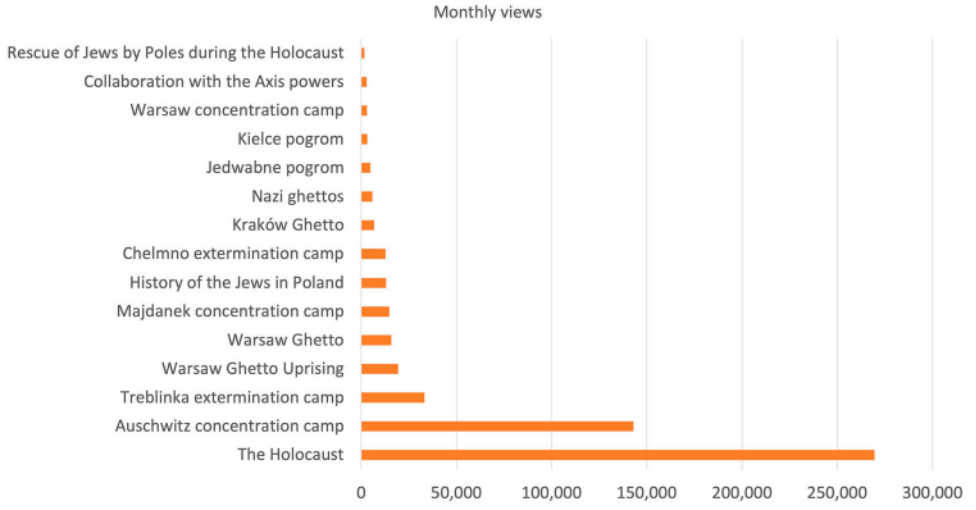

Chart 1. Monthly views of Poland-focused articles relating to the Holocaust.

conclusions. A rich body of scholarship emerged in the 2000s among Polish academics, with new studies on interwar antisemitism, postwar anti-Jewish violence – especially the notorious Kielce (1946) and Kraków (1945) pogroms – and on the Church's connection with and involvement in anti-Jewish hostility.[10] This scholarly drive came on the heels of the publication of Jan Gross's seminal book, *Neighbors* (published in Polish in 2000) about the gruesome murder of the Jews of Jedwabne in the summer of 1941 by their Polish neighbors.[11] The majority of non-Polish and Polish historians alike accepted the basic findings of Gross's research, even if a healthy debate arose on the particulars.[12] Since Gross, growing numbers of historians both in Poland and elsewhere have researched Polish–Jewish wartime relations, critically and dispassionately.[13] One illustration of the Poles' greater willingness to face its past was the government-appointed historical agency, the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). In the early 2000s, the IPN temporarily embraced research on the most painful subjects of Polish–Jewish history.[14]

Gross's work also led to a backlash among some Poles and Polish expatriates. For these people, *Neighbors* and its like appeared as defamatory attacks on the Polish nation. A number of Polish nationalists, among them politicians, journalists, and also some historians, preferred the comfort of old tropes. They completely rejected the dark chapters in

satanic enterprise it was." See Jan Błoński, "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto," in Adam Michnik and Agnieszka Marczyk (eds.), *Against Antisemitism: An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Polish Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 285.

[10] Zimmerman, "Introduction," *Contested Memories*.

[11] Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[12] Even the IPN (state institution enforcing the official narrative in matters of history) confirmed that the murders in Jedwabne were committed by the Poles. See Paweł Machcewicz and Krzysztof Persak (eds.), *Wokół Jedwabnego*, 2 vols. (Warsaw: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2002).

[13] Joanna Beata Michlic, "'At the Crossroads': Jedwabne and Polish Historiography of the Holocaust," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, vol. 31, no. 3 (2017): pp. 297–99.

[14] Joanna Beata Michlic, "Memories of Jews and the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe: The Case of Poland," in David M. Seymour and Mercedes Camino (eds.), *The Holocaust in the Twenty-First Century: Contesting/Contested Memories* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Michlic, "'At the Crossroads.'"

Poland's past, and instead emphasized Polish victimhood and heroism. These right-wing, nationalistic chroniclers of Poland's past are often fringe academics – at least within the field of Holocaust history – and have been criticized by mainstream academia both in Poland and abroad for lacking empirical evidence.[15] But in 2015, with the election of the right-wing Law and Justice party (PiS), they gained a dominant place. The state has tried to impose its view of history, for example by promoting museums featuring Polish suffering and emphasizing the role Poles played in saving Jews.[16] The IPN, which had moved rightward even before PiS's victory, now employs more than 2,500 well-paid professionals (including over 400 employees with doctoral diplomas) and a clear agenda of clearing Poland's reputation.[17] The majority of noteworthy historians of Polish–Jewish relations employed by the IPN, including Andrzej Żbikowski, Dariusz Libionka, Adam Puławski, and Krzysztof Persak, all quit or were fired,[18] and in February 2021, testifying to the institutional culture of this organization, the IPN appointed Dr. Tomasz Greniuch to direct its Wrocław office. Greniuch has been photographed raising his right arm in the so-called Hitler salute (*Hitlergruss*) and was a member of the ONR (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, or the National-Radical Camp), which the Polish Supreme Court agreed 'can be called a fascist organization.'[19]

The Polish government's resolve to control the past culminated with the passage in 2018 of the Amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance, often dubbed the 'Polish Holocaust Law.' This legislation, amending a law which had been in place since 1998, penalizes those who 'slander the good name of the Polish nation' and who 'blame the Polish society for crimes committed by the Nazi Third Reich.'[20] The new law instilled an atmosphere of fear, as it not only delegitimized findings like Gross's, but potentially exposed scholars, educators, teachers, and the reading public

[15]For critiques on fringe academics, see Joanna Michlic, "'Remembering to Remember,' 'Remembering to Benefit,' 'Remembering to Forget': The Variety of Memories of Jews and the Holocaust in Postcommunist Poland" Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs (JCPA), January 1, 2012, https://www.bjpa.org/search-results/publication/18357; Audrey Kichelewski et al., (eds.), *Les Polonais et la Shoah: Une nouvelle école historique* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2019); Havi Dreifuss, *Relations Between Jews and Poles during the Holocaust: The Jewish Perspective* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2018) (particularly pages pp. 17–25); Yehuda Bauer, "Creating a 'Usable' Past: On Holocaust Denial and Distortion," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol. 14, no. 2 (2020): pp. 209–27; Yehuda Bauer, "Pieniądze," in *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol. 14, no. 1, (2020): pp. 85–86; Joanna Beata Michlic and Małgorzata Melchior, "The Memory of the Holocaust in post-1989 Poland: Renewal – its Accomplishments and its Powerlessness," in John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic (eds.), *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).

[16]Jörg Hackmann, "Defending the 'Good Name' of the Polish Nation: Politics of History as a Battlefield in Poland, 2015–18," *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 20, no. 4 (2018): pp. 587–606, doi:10.1080/14623528.2018.1528742.

[17]In 2020, the IPN had 2519 full-time employees, including 114 prosecutors. Of these IPN employees, 2,219 had university degrees, including eight professors, 44 "docents" (Polish equivalent of postdoctoral rank, which – in academic terms – roughly equals associate professorship in a North American university), and 411 employees with a PhD. https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/o-ipn/informacje-o-dzialalnos?fbclid=IwAR2AUY9XeOBSK6JB5nTCNstl2QWbzi2Jg6TqYx6UYKhbz0YghRkPNX336d0a.

[18]Dr. Żbikowski and Dr. Libionka left the IPN in 2008, Dr. Puławski, demoted from a research position, left in 2019, and Dr. Persak was fired in 2016. A similar fate met "minority" historians, experts in Polish-Ukrainian relations, which is suggestive of the battleground. Dr. Mariusz Sawa and Dr. Mariusz Zajączkowski, for example, were fired, respectively, in 2021 and 2022.

[19]Polish Supreme Court on February 17, 2021, said the ONR "can be called a fascist organization." Sąd Najwyższy zdecydował. Można nazywać ONR organizacją faszystowską," *Onet*, July 16, 2021, https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/olsztyn/sad-najwyzszy-zdecydowal-mozna-nazywac-onr-organizacja-faszystowska/wh2tfeh (accessed August 27, 2022).

[20]Current version of the Holocaust Law (Article 55): Art. 55. – [Zaprzeczanie zbrodniom nazistowskim, komunistycznym i innym] – Instytut Pamięci Narodowej – Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, https://sip.lex.pl/akty-prawne/dzu-dziennik-ustaw/instytut-pamieci-narodowej-komisja-scigania-zbrodni-przeciwko-16832221/art-55 (accessed November 20, 2022).

to civil and criminal charges. Furthermore, the law delegated to prosecutors the authority to decide what really happened in the past. Although the PiS's efforts have had few legal ramifications – the handful of lawsuits waged by Polish agencies against 'offending' scholars or journalists failed in the face of lack of evidence[21] – the party has given confidence to far-right Poles both at home and abroad, with worrying consequences. Believers of these ethnonationalist claims are working hard to sway Anglophone public opinion, including through the English-language Wikipedia,[22] the first place nonexperts go for information on most topics.

For the last few years, Wikipedia's articles on the Holocaust in Poland have been shaped by a group of individuals ('editors' or 'Wikipedians' in Wiki parlance) with a Polish nationalist bent. Their Wikipedia names are Piotrus, Volunteer Marek, GizzyCatBella, Nihil novi, Lembit Staan, and Xx236, as well as previously active editors Poeticbent, MyMoloboaccount, Tatzref, Jacurek, and Halibutt.[23] Combined, these individuals have authored substantial portions of multiple Wikipedia articles, both large (like 'History of the Jews in Poland,' where they have authored 67 percent) and small (like 'Naliboki,' where they are responsible for 70 percent – see Chart 2).[24] Their massaging of the past ranges from minor errors to subtle manipulations and outright lies. In one glaring example authored by Halibutt, which reached the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* in 2019, an entire Wikipedia article claimed for fifteen years that in a concentration camp in Warsaw, the Germans annihilated 200,000 non-Jewish Poles in a giant gas chamber.[25] Two editors named K.e.coffman and Icewhiz removed this falsehood,[26] but other manipulations remain and more are added daily to the online encyclopedia.

[21] Best-known is the investigation conducted under Article 133 of the Polish criminal code by the IPN prosecutors against Jan T. Gross regarding his article "Eastern Europe's Crisis of Shame," published in 2015. More recently, Katarzyna Markusz, a doctoral student in history and a journalist for the Jewish.pl website, has also been under investigation by the IPN prosecutors under Article 55 of the IPN Bill for "having slandered the good name of the Polish nation." Several other persons have also been (or are) under investigation. Other historians, including one of the authors of this article (J. Grabowski), faced civil litigation funded, planned, and initiated by publicly subsidized government-organized NGOs (known as GONGOs) acting as proxies for the Polish government.

[22] Unless otherwise specified, all references to Wikipedia in this essay refer to the English-language Wikipedia.

[23] Poeticbent's last contribution was in October 2019. MyMoloboaccount and Tatzref were blocked, in November 2019 and January 2022, respectively. "Block log for User:Tatzref," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Log&page=User%3ATatzref&type=block (accessed August 9, 2022) and "Block log for User:MyMoloboaccount," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Log?type=block&user=&page=MyMoloboaccount&wpdate=&tagfilter=&subtype= (accessed August 11, 2022). Jacurek was blocked in 2011. "Block log for User:Jacurek," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Log&page=Jacurek&type=block (accessed August 11, 2022). Halibutt is deceased. All identify on Wikipedia as he/him/his except GizzyCatBella, who identifies as she/her/hers.

[24] Data generated on August 6, 2022, using the XTools' "Page History" and "Authorship" tools on each of the listed articles, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/articleinfo. This is measured by character count, excluding spaces. The authorship tool does not differentiate between types of edits (e.g. prose, citations, or images); related statistics can be gleaned through the "Top Edit" and "Text Added" tools in the same tool suite. *The data for user Poeticbent includes edits made by his sock, Matalea. Chart data archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish–Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

[25] Benjakob, "The Fake Nazi Death Camp," *Haaretz*, 2019. Halibutt first created the "Warsaw Concentration Camp" Wikipedia article in 2004, inserting the statement "provisional gas chambers located in a railway tunnel near the Warszawa Zachodnia train station" and that "some 200,000 people were killed there by the Germans during the war." Wikipedia article, "Warsaw Concentration Camp," difference between revisions [hereafter diff] by Halibutt, 2:03, August 25, 2004, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:Diff/5667624. User Vorthax adapted this in 2005 to say that "some 200,000 people (mostly Gentile Poles) were killed there." Wikipedia article, "Warsaw Concentration Camp," diff by Vorthax, 9:26, December 17, 2005, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Warsaw_concentration_camp&type=revision&diff=31715694&oldid=30067099.

[26] The misinformation in the article continued to be expanded and developed until K.e.coffman's edits in May 2019 and Icewhiz's deletion of all content and addition of new content in August and September 2019. "Warsaw concentration camp," diff by K.e.coffman, 2:35, May 6, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Warsaw_concentration_camp&type=revision&diff=895717403&oldid=895536012. Wikipedia article, "Warsaw Concentration Camp," diffs

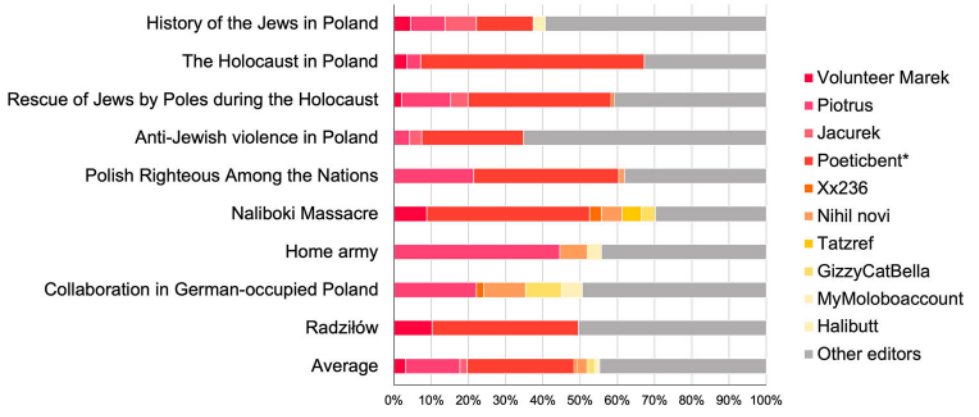

Chart 2. Authorship of Wikipedia articles.

When distorting the past, the editors involved cite unreliable sources such as popular websites, self-published work, or academic work that has been widely discredited. At times they cite solid scholarship but misrepresent it to support their agenda. The same group of Wikipedians also wage a war of legitimacy on Holocaust historians themselves, inserting scathing critiques into Wikipedia biographies of mainstream scholars, and idealizing the biographies of fringe academics.

Holocaust envy, inflation of Polish rescue, and antisemitism

Four distortions dominate Wikipedia's coverage of Polish–Jewish wartime history: a false equivalence narrative suggesting that Poles and Jews suffered equally in World War II; a false innocence narrative, arguing that Polish antisemitism was marginal, while the Poles' role in saving Jews was monumental; antisemitic tropes insinuating that most Jews supported Communism and conspired with Communists to betray Poles (*Żydokomuna* or Judeo–Bolshevism), that money-hungry Jews controlled or still control Poland, and that Jews bear responsibility for their own persecution. Finally, distortionists inflate Jewish collaboration with the Nazis to make it seem an important part of the German policy of the extermination of European Jewry.

Poles as victims and heroes

One prominent example of editors warping the historical record appears in the Wikipedia article 'Rescue of Jews by Poles During the Holocaust,' which inflates the number of Polish victims and saviors.[27] 'Of the estimated 3 million non-Jewish Poles killed in World War II,' claims the article, 'thousands were executed by the Germans solely for saving

made by Icewhiz between 20:35, August 27, 2019 and 18:18, September 5, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Warsaw_concentration_camp&type=revision&diff=914187642&oldid=912781315. Further edits occurred after the *Haaretz* article in October 2019. See Benjakob, "The Fake Nazi Death Camp." On the editor K.e.coffman's important work on Wikipedia, see Noam Cohen, "One Woman's Mission to Rewrite Nazi History on Wikipedia," *Wired*, https://www.wired.com/story/one-womans-mission-to-rewrite-nazi-history-wikipedia/ (accessed September 1, 2022).

[27]We use the present tense to describe information that exists on Wikipedia as of the time of writing this essay, but readers should take into account that Wikipedia articles change all the time.

Jews.'[28] Both figures are false. The estimate of 3 million non-Jewish Polish victims of World War II was pulled out of thin air in 1946 by Jakub Berman, head of the Polish security apparatus, in order to establish Polish and Jewish losses on par.[29] According to historian Gniazdowski, officials at the time presented 'an equal proportion of losses among Poles and Jews, although according to the contemporary, and to subsequent estimates, Jewish losses were higher.' Evidently, he explained, they were 'fearful of issuing an official estimate which would indicate that Poles were 'less impacted' by war than the Jews.'[30] It was one of the first examples of a phenomenon which historians today call 'Holocaust envy.'[31] In contrast, the 1945 official Polish estimates put the number of Polish victims of World War II at 1.8 million. The most recent estimates put the ethnic Polish losses at closer to 2 million, still well below the Wikipedia claim.[32] Moreover, the number of Poles executed by the Germans solely for helping the Jews was not in the thousands, as the Wikipedia page claims. Research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s showed that the number of Polish victims killed for aiding Jews was closer to 800.[33] More recently, historians reevaluated these estimates downward still.[34]

In order to shore up the argument about the alleged thousands of Poles killed for rescuing Jews, the Wikipedia article cites Richard C. Lukas's 1989 book *Out of the Inferno: Poles Remember the Holocaust*, a book that has been heavily criticized by experts. Page thirteen of this book estimates that 'a few thousand to fifty thousand' Poles were killed by Germans for rescuing Jews. Yet, *Out of the Inferno* comprises little more than an anthology of short testimonies collected, edited, and introduced by Lukas. Page fifteen of his book says the following:

> 'If the truth were known,' said one of my Polish respondents, who was researching the subject at the time of his death, 'the number of Jews hiding in Poland––most of them helped in some way by Gentiles––ran into the hundreds of thousands. Another informed estimate of the number of Jews sheltered by Poles at one point during the German occupation places the figure as high as 450,000.'[35]

[28] Wikipedia article, "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," Wikipedia, revision from 8:06, May 24, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&oldid=1089518133. This line in the article's header was originally inserted on May 28, 2009, by an IP, while the original claim based on Lukas was inserted with the article's creation on November 6, 2008, by Ecoleetage. See "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," diff by 78.30.78.254, 10:17, May 28, 2009, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&diff=next&oldid=292766886 and Wikipedia article, "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," Wikipedia, revision from 16:28, November 6, 2008, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&oldid=250051060.

[29] Marcin Zaremba, *Wielka Trwoga: Polska, 1944–1947* (Warsaw: Znak, 2012). Berman was Jewish, but first and foremost he was a communist activist and ideologue, concerned that "belittling" ethnic Polish losses would further reinforce and confirm the popular conviction in the Polish society that Polish communists were nothing more than "Jewish lackeys" parachuted from the Soviet Union.

[30] M. Gniazdowski, "'Ustalić liczbę zabitych na 6 milionów.' Dyrektywa Jakuba Bermana dla Biura Odszkodowań Wojennych przy Prezydium Rady Ministrów," *Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny*, vol. 1 (2008): p. 104.

[31] See for example, Karyn Ball and Per Anders Rudling, "The Underbelly of Canadian Multiculturalism: Holocaust Obfuscation and Envy in the Debate about the Canadian Museum for Human Rights," *Holocaust Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3 (2014): pp. 33–80.

[32] C. Łuczak, "Szanse i trudności bilansu demograficznego Polski w latach 1939–1945," *Dzieje Najnowsze* 2 (1994): pp. 9–15.

[33] Ryszard Walczak et al. (eds.), *Those Who Helped: Polish Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust* (Warszawa: IPN, 1997).

[34] Martyna Grądzka-Rejak and Aleksandra Namysło, (eds.), *Represje za pomoc Żydom na okupowanych ziemiach polskich w czasie II wojny światowej*, vol. 1 (Warsaw: IPN, 2019), p. 464.

[35] Richard C. Lukas, *Out of the Inferno: Poles Remember the Holocaust* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1989), p. 15.

We are asked to believe the estimate of one Jan Januszewski given to Lukas during an interview in 1982, yet no research substantiates it. Furthermore, the estimate of 450,000 Jews allegedly sheltered by the Poles is based on the writings of one Władysław Żarski-Zajdler, author of a propaganda brochure published in Poland in 1968, as part of that year's government-sponsored antisemitic campaign. None of these figures are borne out by historical research.

Wikipedia also downplays the scope and nature of Polish collaboration with the Germans. The Wikipedia article 'Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust' claims that 'less than one tenth of 1 percent of native Poles collaborated, according to statistics of the Israeli War Crimes Commission.' Historians have no way of making such an estimation, which depends on how one defines 'collaboration.' Some early work by the Israeli government estimated the number of people directly and institutionally engaged in organized killings, but the number of individuals who contributed indirectly to the Jewish catastrophe remains unknown.[36] 'The History of the Jews in Poland' Wikipedia article similarly states, 'Although the Holocaust occurred largely in German-occupied Poland, there was little collaboration with the Nazis by its citizens.'[37] This claim has no footnote or truth to it; we know from voluminous research that betrayal of Jews by Poles was common.[38]

The Wikipedia article 'Collaboration with the Axis powers' provides still more errors of this sort. 'Shortly after the German Invasion of Poland,' says the article's section on Poland, 'the Nazi authorities ordered the mobilization of prewar Polish officials and the Polish police (the Blue Police), who were forced, under penalty of death, to work for the German occupation authorities.' The Germans did indeed impose severe punishments on those refusing to serve in the new police force, but not the death penalty, and no documented case exists of a Polish officer being executed for such refusal. 'While many officials and police reluctantly followed German orders,' continues the article, 'some acted as agents for the Polish resistance.' This phrasing suggests Polish collaborators were at most reluctant, never willing; in fact, some police and civil administration officials served the Germans with zeal and devotion.[39] The article claims that

> the Polish Underground State's wartime Underground courts investigated 17,000 Poles who collaborated with the Germans; about 3,500 were sentenced to death. Some of the collaborators––*szmalcowniks*––blackmailed Jews and their Polish rescuers and assisted the Germans as informers, turning in Jews and Poles who hid them, and reporting on the Polish resistance.

This excerpt implies that the Polish underground was preoccupied with penalizing the blackmailers of Jews. In reality, no more than seven out of thousands of the people

[36]The "Israeli War Crimes Commission" statistics seem to originate from an essay from the 1960s by one Leo Heiman, which provides no footnote. Leo Heiman, "Ukrainians and the Jews," in *Ukrainians and Jews, Articles, Testimonies, Letters and Official Documents Dealing with Interrelations of Ukrainians and Jews in the Past and Present: A Symposium* (New York: The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, 1966), p. 60.

[37]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," Wikipedia, revision from 3:55, June 28, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&oldid=1095396439.

[38]See for example Machcewicz and Persak, (eds.), *Wokół Jedwabnego*; Jan Grabowski and Barbara Engelking, (eds.), *Dalej jest noc: losy Żydów w wybranych powiatach okupowanej Polski* (*Night Without End: The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland*), 2 vols. (Warsaw: Polish Center for Holocaust Research, 2018).

[39]Engelking and Grabowski, (eds.), *Dalej jest noc;* Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, "Polnische Bürgermeister und der Holocaust im Generalgouvernement Besatzung, Kollaboration und Handlungsmöglichkeiten," *Bulletin des Fritz Bauer Instituts,* (2021), pp. 26–35.

involved in this activity were actually sentenced to death and executed, despite desperate pleas made by the Committee to Aid Jews (Żegota) to the underground decision-makers to pay more attention to fighting the *szmalcowniks*.[40]

Still more exaggerated Polish heroism appears in the article 'Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust,' which claims that 'the Home Army (the Polish Resistance) alerted the world to the Holocaust through the reports of Polish Army officer Witold Pilecki, conveyed by Polish government-in-exile courier Jan Karski.'[41] Nearly everything is wrong here. First of all, as we know today, the report regarding the destruction of Polish Jewry was delivered to the Polish authorities in London, not by Jan Karski (nowadays celebrated in film and popular literature), but by another courier.[42] Second, Pilecki wrote his report in the summer of 1943, by which point the vast majority of Polish Jews had already been murdered, and Jan Karski, the courier, had left Poland in the fall of 1942. Karski (or any other courier) simply could not have carried abroad a report written nearly one year after his departure. Finally, Pilecki's 1943 40-page report (the so-called Report W) described the situation at Auschwitz I main camp, but barely mentioned the ongoing extermination of Jews in nearby Auschwitz II–Birkenau and instead focused on the Polish camp resistance movement.[43]

In another instance of inflated claims about Polish aid toward Jews, the same article states (once again citing Lukas), 'The imposition of the death penalty for Poles aiding Jews was unique to Poland among all German-occupied countries and was a result of the conspicuous and spontaneous nature of such an aid.'[44] In fact, the death penalty did not apply specifically to Poles, but to all non-German inhabitants of the Generalgouvernement, including millions of Ukrainians, Belorussians, and other minorities living on prewar Polish territory. Moreover, the obvious explanation for the introduction of the death penalty for aiding and abetting the Jews was that Poland housed the majority of European Jews, and it was in Poland where the Germans decided to implement the 'final solution of the Jewish question,' namely, the physical extermination of European Jews. Furthermore, the death penalty was introduced in October 1941,[45] long before any signs of 'conspicuous and spontaneous help' could have manifested themselves. Typical of the feel-good narrative commonly espoused by Polish nationalists, the Wikipedia article tells the story of the 'Ulma family (father, mother and six children) of the village of Markowa near Łańcut … [who] were executed jointly by the Nazis with the eight Jews they hid.' True, but these Poles hiding the Jews in Markowa were most afraid of their Polish neighbors who, in large numbers, conducted searches and manhunts for Jews in the village and in the area

[40] Andrzej Żbikowski, *Polacy i Zydzi pod okupacja niemiecką, 1939-1945: Studia i Materiały* (Warsaw: IPN, 2006), pp. 482–84.
[41] Wikipedia article, "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," Wikipedia, revision from 8:06, May 24, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&oldid=1089518133.
[42] Adam Puławski, "Revisiting Jan Karski's Final Mission," *Israeli Journal of Foreign Affairs*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2021): pp. 289–97; Adam Puławski, *Wobec niespotykanego w dziejach mordu. Rząd RP na uchodźstwie, Delegatura Rządu RP na Kraj, AK a eksterminacja ludności żydowskiej od wielkiej akcji do powstania w getcie warszawskim* (Chełm: Stowarzyszenie Rocznik Chełmski, 2018).
[43] See Adam Cyra: *Raport Witolda z 1943 r.*, in "Biuletyn Towarzystwa Opieki nad Oświęcimiem" (1991) nr 12.
[44] Wikipedia article, "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," Wikipedia, revision from 8:06, May 24, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&oldid=1089518133.
[45] The Third Decree of General Governor Hans Frank concerning restrictions on residency in the Generalgouvernement and introducing the death penalty for aid rendered to Jews, October 15, 1941; Verordnungsblatt für das Generalgouvernement. Dziennik Rozporządzeń dla Generalnego Gubernatorstwa, Cracow, October 25, 1941, p. 595.

throughout the occupation. Furthermore, the Ulmas were denounced to the Germans by a Polish policeman. In such a way, most of Markowa's Jews were delivered for execution to the Germans by their own Polish neighbors, some of whom continued to look for the Jews even after liberation.[46] This entire context is tellingly absent from the discussed article.

In another attempt at reinforcing the heroic Polish narrative, the Wikipedia article states,

> Nazi death squads carried out mass executions of entire villages that were discovered to be aiding Jews on a communal level. In the villages of Białka near Parczew and Sterdyń near Sokołów Podlaski, 150 villagers were massacred for sheltering Jews.[47]

Even more misleading claims appear in the Wikipedia article 'Nazi crimes against the Polish nation,' which says, 'About 20,000 villagers, some of whom were burned alive, were murdered in large-scale punitive operations targeting rural settlements suspected of aiding the resistance or hiding Jews and other fugitives.'[48] These statements distort and lie. Individual shootings were reported on numerous occasions, but never were entire village populations targeted for helping Jews. It is true that the Germans executed 96 men in the abovementioned village of Białka. It is not true, however, that this act of terror in any way stemmed from villagers helping Jews. The German crime was an act of reprisal for the assistance that the peasants were thought to have given to the local communist and left-wing partisans.[49] The presence of these partisans (and there were some Jews among them) is well-documented in historical literature. It was only recently that attempts have been made, within the framework of the Polish 'history policy,' to link the mass shooting in Białka to the alleged help offered to Jews by the local population. The editors cite a 1988 work by Waclaw Zajączkowski entitled *Martyrs of Charity*, a blatantly hagiographical book, devoid of any academic standards, written to elevate Polish national heroism and suffering.[50] Interestingly, the Polish Wikipedia entry for Białka correctly states that the villagers were executed for helping the partisans, while the English version erroneously claims that the execution resulted from local peasants helping the Jews.[51]

In another case of exaggerating Polish suffering and heroism, the Wikipedia article states,

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[46] Jan Grabowski and Dariusz Libionka, "Distorting and Rewriting the History of the Holocaust in Poland. The Case of the Ulma Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews During World War II in Markowa," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2017): pp. 29–60.

[47] Wikipedia article, "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," Wikipedia, revision from 8:06, May 24, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&oldid=1089518133.

[48] Wikipedia article, "Nazi Crimes Against the Polish Nation," Wikipedia, revision from 14:14, June 15, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nazi_crimes_against_the_Polish_nation&oldid=1093264615.

[49] Geoffrey P. Megargee, ed., *Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945*, vol. 1: *Early Camps, Youth Camps, and Concentration Camps and Subcamps under the SS-Business Administration Main Office (WVHA)* (Washington: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2009), p. 692.

[50] Wacław Zajączkowski, *Martyrs of Charity* (Washington: Saint Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, 1989).

[51] "Białka (powiat parczewski)," Polish Wikipedia, revision from April 7, 2022, https://pl.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bia%C5%82ka_(powiat_parczewski)&oldid=66798428. The same erroneous interpretation appears in a Wikipedia entry devoted to the village Białka, which reads, "In December 1942 close to a hundred villagers were executed for helping the Jews." The source is a book by Józef Fajkowski and Jan Religa, *Zbrodnie hitlerowskie na wsi polskiej, 1939–1945* [Nazi Crimes in Rural Areas of Poland, 1939–45] (Warsaw: Książka I Wiedza, 1981), pp. 21–22. The quoted book, on the given pages, notes the fact that a Jewish partisan unit was present in the area but that the German punitive expedition was a part of reprisals for assisting partisans, not the Jews. See Wikipedia article, "Parczew County," Wikipedia, revision from 12:03, June 8, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bia%C5%82ka,_Parczew_County&oldid=900910905.

> after the end of the war Poles who saved Jews during the Nazi occupation very often became the victims of repression at the hands of the Communist security apparatus, due to their instinctive devotion to social justice which they saw as being abused by the government.[52]

This quote is credited to Jan Żaryn, a fervent nationalist, a darling of Polish right-wing populists, and the current chief of the newly established, government-funded Roman Dmowski Institute of National Thought (Dmowski was a prewar Polish politician, an unrepentant antisemite, and a great admirer of Adolf Hitler). Żaryn's assertion is simply wrong. After the war, Polish rescuers of Jews were not afraid of communist authorities as much as they were afraid of right-wing anticommunist militias for whom rescuing the Jews was tantamount to national treason.

Examples of Polish rescuers killed or threatened by Polish nationalists surface in many Polish and Jewish accounts from the post-1944 period. Perhaps the best known is the case of Antonina Wyrzykowska from the Jedwabne area who managed to rescue a group of several Jews in her house. Soon after the liberation she and her husband were severely beaten by a group of Polish nationalists furious at her for having saved Jews. In a second case, righteous Jozefa Gibes (who saved a Jewish family of four) died soon after the war. Her body, lying in a coffin in the church, was sprayed with bullets by members of the underground as retribution for her help to the Jews.[53] The list goes on of rescuers punished by either the anticommunist and antisemitic underground, or by Polish neighbors. Alfreda and Bolesław Pietraszek from Czekanów, Anna Wasilewska and her family from Zucielec, and the Danieluk family from Solniki, were all intimidated, wounded, or killed by the underground after the end of the war for having sheltered Jews under the Nazi occupation.[54] A Polish rescuer of a Jewish infant shortly after the war wrote the following to the Central Committee of Polish Jews: 'Two weeks ago, a band of native fascists broke into my house and smashed everything to pieces. They beat and kicked me and cut my wife's and daughters' hair, shouting: "that is for the Jewish child."'[55] Similar reports were filed from practically all areas of occupied Poland where significant numbers of Jews survived in hiding. Jan T. Gross summarized this situation in the following words:

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[52]Wikipedia article, "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," Wikipedia, revision from 8:06, May 24, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&oldid=1089518133.

[53]Marian Suda, "Sprawiedliwy Józef Gibes" [The Righteous Józef Gibes], Kurier Dąbrowski, 1995 [n.d.], p. IV. After the liberation, the most frequent request made by the Polish rescuers of the Jews was, "do not tell anyone where you were hiding." Miriam Hochberg-Marianska, herself Jewish, was a member of Zegota, an organization to help Jews in hiding. In Kraków, she arranged for Jewish children to be sheltered by Polish families. Shortly after the war, she wrote a book about her wartime experiences, recounting that many Poles who risked their lives to save Jewish children asked her not to use their names. "I don't know," Marianska wrote, "whether anyone outside of Poland can understand that saving the life of an innocent child pursued by a murderer, can expose one to shame, or expose to danger." See Maria Hochberg-Marianska and Noe Gruess, *Dzieci oskarżaja* [The Children Accuse] (Warsaw: publisher unknown, 1947), p. XXXII. Henryk Stecki was hiding close to Kraków. After the war, the locals (neighbors of the people who hid him) started to threaten the righteous Poles by whipping and burning down their farms. In practically all cases, the threat to Polish rescuers did not come from the communist authorities but rather from the anticommunist underground or from neighbors, local Poles.

[54]See still more examples in Mirosław Tryczyk, *Drzazga. Kłamstwa silniejsze niż śmierć* [The Splinter. Lies Stronger than Death] (Warsaw: Znak, 2010), pp. 111–31; Ewa Opawska, "Historia pomocy – Rodzina Pietraszków," *POLIN, Polscy Sprawiedliwi* (March 2011), https://sprawiedliwi.org.pl/pl/historie-pomocy/historia-pomocy-rodzina-pietraszkow?fbclid=IwAR3bZn3ZWNSXEMQxxG5YF4GrG_pLx59m7zGD92-pasDNS1L3WtTnQgv5AzA. https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?searchType=righteous_only&language=en&itemId=4410319&ind=0 (accessed August 7, 2022).

[55]Alicja Podbielska, "'That's for Harboring Jews!' Post-Liberation Violence against Holocaust Rescuers in Poland, 1944–1948, Studies in Violence and Power, WWII and Following Years (1940–1949)," *History of Antisemitism*, vol. 6 (2019), p. 116.

> The future Righteous' wartime behavior broke the socially approved norm, demonstrating that they were different from everybody else, and therefore, a danger to the community. They were a threat to others because, potentially, they could bear witness. They could tell what had happened to local Jews because they were not––whether by their deeds or by their reluctance to act––bonded into a community of silence over this matter.[56]

The Wikipedia article 'Polish Righteous Among the Nations' echoes the same tropes of Polish heroism. 'Many Polish Gentiles concealed hundreds of thousands of their Jewish neighbors,' it states.[57] Considering no more than 30,000 (out of more than 3 million) Polish Jews survived the war and occupation on Polish territory,[58] and that many of these survived without Polish help, to argue that hundreds of thousands of Jews found shelter in Polish homes is nonsensical. Wikipedia's reference is Tadeusz Piotrowski's *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918–1947*.[59] This book, published in 1998, has received only two academic reviews, consists of little more than a collection of quotations taken out of context, and freely quotes Leszek Zebrowski, an economist by trade, known for his ultra-nationalistic views and spirited defense of prominent Polish antisemites.[60] Piotrowski's work attempts to convince the reader that Jews collaborated massively with the communists both during and after the war, that Jewish traitors and collaborators were one of the major reasons for the Jewish catastrophe, and that despite all of this, Poles did everything humanly possible to save their Jewish co-citizens. The rare demonstrations of Polish anti-semitism, argues Piotrowski, stemmed directly from the attitudes and behavior of the Jews.

A historian will immediately recognize the statement on Poles hiding 'hundreds of thousands' as absurd, yet most readers of the 'Polish Righteous Among the Nations' page will not. Indeed, the page boasts 'Good Article' status, which means that it has been deemed 'well written, contain[ing] factually accurate and verifiable information … [and] neutral in point of view.'[61] The person nominating this article for Good Article status was an editor named Piotrus, on whom we will expand further in the essay.[62]

The theme of Polish innocence resurfaces in the Wikipedia article on the July 1946 Kielce pogrom. The deadliest pogrom in postwar Europe, this event claimed the lives of 42 Polish Jews, the majority Holocaust survivors, when a Polish mob enraged by tales of ritual murder attacked their neighbors. Misleadingly, over a fifth of the Wikipedia article comprises a subsection entitled 'Evidence of Soviet Involvement,' which suggests that the Kielce pogrom was somehow planned by the Soviets. This theory has been

[56]Gross, *Neighbors*, p. 238.
[57]Wikipedia article, "Polish Righteous Among the Nations," Wikipedia, revision from 14:40, January 25, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Polish_Righteous_Among_the_Nations&oldid=1067860520.
[58]These numbers do not take into account the 250,000 Polish Jews who survived the war in the Soviet Union and had never encountered the Germans.
[59]Tadeusz Piotrowski, *Poland's Holocaust: Ethnic Strife, Collaboration with Occupying Forces and Genocide in the Second Republic, 1918–1947* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1998).
[60]Natalia Sawka, "Antysemita Leszek Żebrowski poprowadzi wykład o 'żołnierzach wyklętych,'" *Gazeta Wyborcza*, March 1, 2016, https://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,19698963,antysemita-leszek-zebrowski-poprowadzi-wyklad-o-zolnierzach.html.
[61]"Wikipedia: Good Articles," Wikipedia, revision from May 16, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Good_articles&oldid=956946482.
[62]"Wikipedia: Good Article Nominations," diff by Piotrus, September 28, 2008, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Good_article_nominations&diff=next&oldid=241558800.

roundly rejected by all serious scholars and today finds an audience only among fringe Polish nationalists and conspiracy theorists wishing to prove that Communist Soviets, not Polish antisemitic masses, bore responsibility for the massacre. Tellingly, Joanna Tokarska-Bakir's *Pod Klątwą. Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego* (*Under the curse: the social portrait of the Kielce pogrom)*, winner of the 2019 Yad Vashem International Book Award, the definitive study which put the Soviet involvement thesis to rest, is completely absent from the Wikipedia article. Instead, readers again encounter references to Piotrowski's *Poland's Holocaust*.[63]

Jews as communists and collaborators

Wikipedia's coverage of Polish–Jewish relations contains both subtle and overt prejudices against Jews. Articles on the Holocaust and interwar years engage in victim blaming, suggesting Jews were at fault for antisemitism. Some statements hint that Jews are racially different from ethnic Poles, others argue that Jews refused to integrate into Polish society, and still others invoke an image of greedy Jews who enjoyed a plush life while ethnic Poles lived in poverty. Take the claim in the 'History of the Jews in Poland' article, that Jews have 'specific physical characteristics.' The citation for this sentence is a broken link to a website referencing Nechama Tec.[64] Nechama Tec has said that the Germans used 'the emotional argument that the Jews of Europe were not simply another ethnic minority, but rather a separate race, with separate and readily distinguishable values and, in particular, physical characteristics.' Tec never said that Jews looked different, though. Indeed, she emphasized that 'belying this myth was the fact that the Germans occupying Poland could not, by employing their own distinctions, separate Jew from Christian.'[65] There were many stereotypes that Jews in hiding had to be aware of, but it is one thing to be aware of existing stereotypes and quite another to confirm their credibility, as the article seems to do.

Equally problematic in the same article is the sentence, 'In many areas of the country, the majority of retail businesses were owned by Jews, who were sometimes among the wealthiest members of their communities.' Since research on interwar Polish Jewry has shown that most Jews lived in poverty, this emphasis on Jewish wealth misleads readers.[66] The citation to this claim is page 84 in a book by one Peter Stachura, but that page contains no such information.[67] In its original version, inserted in 2008, the sentence had no citation whatsoever and was even more misleading: 'some Jews were

[63]Wikipedia article, "Kielce Pogrom," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Kielce_pogrom&oldid=1102510357.

[64]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," Wikipedia, revision from 3:55, June 28, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&oldid=1095396439 (accessed July 12, 2022). The citation refers to "Encyclopedia – Hidden Jews," linked to http://www.holocaustsurvivors.org/data.show.php?di=record&da=encyclopedia&ke=98. Here is a link that works (https://www.holocaustsurvivors.org/reference/encyclopedia/#encyH, when clicking on Hidden Jews), referencing Nechama Tec.

[65]Nechama Tec, *When the Light Pierced the Darkness: Christian Rescue of Jews in Nazi-Occupied Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 40.

[66]Emanuel Melzer, *No Way Out: The Politics of Polish Jewry, 1935–1939* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1997), pp. 3–4; Gershon Bacon, "Poland from 1795 to 1939," *Yivo Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Poland/Poland_from_1795_to_1939 (accessed August 7, 2022); Joseph Marcus, *Social and Political History of the Jews in Poland 1919–1939* (Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), pp. 64–65.

[67]Peter Stachura, *Poland 1918-1945: An Interpretative Documentary History of the Second Republic* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 84.

among the wealthiest citizens of Poland.'[68] Past versions of the Wikipedia article 'History of the Jews in Poland' contained more distortions, such as the statement, introduced by an editor called Jacurek in 2007, that 'Poland's postwar Communist government was Jewish-dominated. Two out of three communist leaders who dominated Poland between 1948 and 1956 (Jakub Berman and Hilary Minc) were of Jewish origin.'[69] Jacurek's assertion is a typical example of antisemitic tropes being used by distortionists. Indeed, there were some people (a minority, obviously) of Jewish origin in the postwar communist apparatus in Poland. They were, however, most of all – as was clear in the case of Jakub Berman – loyal and ideologically engaged communists, for whom concepts of ethnic identity carried little weight when set against their class allegiance.[70] Implying that politicians' Jewish origins informed their political choices and decisions, or that they pursued an undefined 'Jewish agenda,' is one of the old antisemitic clichés that have been used to attack statesmen from Benjamin Disraeli to Léon Blum and beyond.

Multiple Wikipedia articles portray Jews as perpetrators, above all as keen collaborators with the Germans. In such a narrative, Poles faced threats from everyone, Jews included. 'Polish rescuers [of Jews] faced threats from unsympathetic neighbors, the Polish-German Volksdeutsche, the ethnic Ukrainian pro-Nazis, as well as blackmailers called *szmalcowniks*, along with the Jewish collaborators from Zagiew and Group 13,' states the article 'Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust,' adding, 'The Catholic saviors of Jews were also betrayed under duress by the Jews in hiding following capture by the German Order Police battalions and the Gestapo, which resulted in the Nazi murder of the entire networks of Polish helpers.'[71] In reality, the activities of the collaborationist Group 13 in the Warsaw ghetto (whose members had been arrested by the Germans in April 1942) had no bearing on the fate of Poles hiding the Jews after the liquidation of the ghettos. The Wikipedia editors once again cite Zajączkowski's pious hagiography *Martyrs of Charity* and place blame for the Holocaust on the shoulders of the victims, a form of denial and distortion which recurs frequently nowadays in the writings of Polish nationalists associated with the IPN.

Wikipedia articles repeatedly inflate and distort the phenomenon of Jewish collaborators. In the article 'Collaboration with the Axis powers,' over a quarter of the section on Poland covers the Jewish Councils, the Judenräte, wrongly casting them predominantly as German collaborators. The article states,

> The Germans set up Jewish-run governing bodies in Jewish communities and ghettos–– Judenrat (Jewish council) that served as self-enforcing intermediaries for managing Jewish communities and ghettos; and Jewish Ghetto Police (Jüdischer Ordnungsdienst), which functioned as auxiliary police forces tasked with maintaining order and combating crime .... Additionally, Jewish collaborationist groups such as Żagiew and Group 13 worked directly for the German Gestapo, informing on Polish resistance efforts to save Jews.

[68]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Tymek, 4:53, December 12, 2008, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_Jews_in_Poland&diff=prev&oldid=257632501.
[69]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Jacurek, 3:49, December 19, 2007, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=178870194.
[70]See the interviews with Polish communists, including Jakub Berman, in Teresa Torańska, *Oni* ["They"] (London: Aneks, 1985).
[71]Wikipedia article, "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," Wikipedia, revision from 8:06, May 24, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&oldid=1089518133.

Jewish council members were hardly 'self-enforcing intermediaries for managing Jewish communities.' They were tightly supervised by the German police (Schupo, Orpo, Gestapo, to name but a few), the Polish police, and German civil administrators, while the Jewish police were closely supervised by the Polish Blue Police. Judenrat members who failed to comply usually faced imprisonment and death, and most Jewish policemen were murdered only shortly after the other Jews in their local community. Placing those people on equal footing with Polish policemen and administrators, who had a real choice, who could kill, and who could refuse to kill with impunity, gravely distorts history.[72]

Similar problems plague the article 'Collaboration in German-Occupied Poland,' where alleged Jewish collaboration with the Nazis takes up more space than the Ukrainian, Belorussian, and ethnic German collaboration combined. 'Jews helped the Germans in return for limited freedom, safety and other compensation (food, money) for the collaborators and their relatives,' the article posits. 'Some were motivated purely by self-interest, such as individual survival, revenge, or greed; others were coerced into collaborating with the Germans.' The editors writing these sentences seem to forget that Jewish collaborators were, above all, victims and hostages of a choiceless choice. They became 'forced traitors,' to use Doris Tausendfreund's expression, in order to preserve their own lives, or the lives of their loved ones.[73]

More dubious claims follow, such as 'In Warsaw, the collaborationist groups Zagiew and Group 13, led by Abraham Gancwajch and colloquially known as the 'Jewish Gestapo,' inflicted considerable damage on both Jewish and Polish underground resistance movements.' Gancwajch did indeed serve as a Jewish collaborator in the Warsaw ghetto, but no evidence suggests he inflicted any damage on the Polish underground. The source of this statement, Henryk Piecuch, is not an academic but a former employee of the Polish communist Ministry of Interior, without any historical training. Given that he lacks any expertise on wartime Jewish–Polish history and provides no evidence of any work in the archives, quoting him as an authority on these topics is illogical. The article further claims that 'over a thousand such Jewish Nazi collaborators, some armed with firearms, served under the German Gestapo as informers on Polish resistance efforts to hide Jews' and that 'at the end of 1941 and the start of 1942 there were some 15,000 'Jewish Gestapo' agents in the General Government.' These figures, attributed to Piecuch and Piotrowski, are blatantly false. The article's assertion that the Zagiew network used Hotel Polski to entrap '2,500 Jews … [who were then] captured by the Germans' also strays from the truth. The Hotel Polski affair was not initiated by Jewish collaborators (although some, like the notorious Lolek Skosowski, were involved), rather it was planned by the Warsaw Gestapo. Indeed, the plan aimed to create a place for exchanging Jews for German prisoners of war held by the Allies. Although most of the Jews who went through Hotel Polski died, several hundred others were sent abroad, exchanged, and continued on to Palestine, surviving the war.[74]

The same article also talks about

[72] Jan Grabowski, *Na Posterunku. Rola Polskiej Policji Granatowej w Zagładzie Żydów* [*On Duty:The Role of the Polish 'Blue' Police in the Holocaust*] (Warsaw: Czarne Publishing House, 2020).
[73] Doris Tausendfreund, *Erzwungener Verrat. Jüdische "Greifer" im Dienst der Gestapo, 1943–1945* (Berlin: Metropol, 2006).
[74] Agnieszka Haska, *Hotel Polski w Warszawie, 1943* (Warszawa: IFiS, 2015).

> a 70-strong group led by a Jewish collaborator called Hening [which] was tasked with operating against the Polish resistance, and was quartered at the Gestapo's Warsaw headquarters on ulica Szucha (Szuch Street [*sic*]). Similar groups and individuals operated in towns and cities across German-occupied Poland––including Józef Diamand [*sic*] in Kraków.

The alleged group led by Hening is unknown to historians of Warsaw Jewry and Wikipedia's author for this claim is, once again, Tadeusz Piotrowski. Meanwhile, the alleged group of Jewish collaborators led by Józef Diamant in Kraków is a fabrication exposed by Kraków-based historian Alicja Jarkowska-Natkaniec. In her study, she not only debunks claims regarding Diamant, but she also shows that most of the Polish underground fighters denounced in Kraków to the Germans were turned in by ethnic Poles.[75]

The charge of *Żydokomuna*, that Jews were in the majority communist or conspired with the communists to hurt Poles, occurs frequently on Wikipedia. One vivid example of this form of antisemitism was made by an editor called Poeticbent, in real life Richard Tylman, a Polish–Canadian poet, and painter.[76] In 2015, Poeticbent inserted into Wikipedia an image (Figure 1) showing a poster written in Yiddish, placed just beneath a hammer and sickle sign in Soviet-occupied Białystok. Poeticbent captioned it, 'Jewish welcoming banner for the Soviet forces invading Poland.'[77] In fact, this image showed nothing of the sort. The poster actually read, 'Election of delegates for Western Belorussia People's Assembly,' meaning this was a Soviet sign advertising Soviet-imposed elections. The Soviets' choice of Yiddish reflected this language's importance in Białystok, where Jews, most of whom spoke Yiddish, comprised over 40 percent of the population.[78] Poeticbent's false caption, combined with the photograph's particular composition – Hebrew letters directly under the USSR's emblem – bolster the entrenched stereotype identifying Jews with communism. Furthermore, in a country brutally occupied by the Soviets, Poeticbent's edit painted Jews as perpetrators. The image remained in Wikipedia, wrongly captioned, until 2018, when the editor Icewhiz corrected its description.[79]

Another form of antisemitism in Wikipedia's coverage of World War II in Poland comprises fantastical accusations of Jews as perpetrators of wide-scale crimes. In March 2011, in an article about the northeastern Polish town of Stawiski, Poeticbent wrote that

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[75]Alicia Jarkowska-Natkaniec, "On the So-Called 'Diamant Network': The Activities of Jewish Undercover Agents in Occupied Kraków in Relation to the Polish Underground," *Yad Vashem Studies*, vol. 46 (2018): pp. 73–102.

[76]Poeticbent has identified publicly as Richard Tylman in his Wikipedia user page. "User:Poeticbent," Wikipedia, revision from https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Poeticbent&oldid=1091550201. Details on Richard Tylman can be found on his webpage, http://richardtylman.atspace.com/index.html (accessed August 9, 2022).

[77]Inserted into the Wikipedia articles, "Bialystok Ghetto," diff by Poeticbent, 21:40, August 5, 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bia%C5%82ystok_Ghetto&diff=794106878&oldid=793942440 and "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Poeticbent, 21:12, December 12, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=694967242&oldid=694922090. See also Wikipedia article, "Białystok following 1939," revision from 21:02, December 12, 2015, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Bialystok-following-1939-So.jpg&oldid=181725277.

[78]Sara Bender, *The Jews of Bialystok During World War II and the Holocaust* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2008), p. 19.

[79]Editor Icewhiz corrected the caption in November 2018. Wikipedia article, "Bialystok following 1939," diff by Icewhiz, 7:54, November 20, 2018, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Bialystok-following-1939-So.jpg&diff=next&oldid=243794137; Wikipedia article, "Białystok Ghetto," diff by Icewhiz, 7:52, November 20, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bia%C5%82ystok_Ghetto&diff=next&oldid=869772469; and Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Icewhiz, 7:51, November 20, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=869773368&oldid=868639847.

Figure 1. Photograph of a sign in Białystok, wrongly captioned by Poeticbent as a Jewish welcoming banner for the Soviets.

> Upon the Soviet invasion of eastern Poland in 1939, the local administration was abolished by the NKWD [National Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the Soviet secret police] and replaced with Jewish communists who declared Soviet allegiance. Ethnic Polish families were being rounded up by newly formed Jewish militia, and deported to Siberia.[80]

The footnote referred to scholarly works by Alexander Rossino, Dov Levin, and Yitzhak Arad, but a review of these texts reveals that not a single one contains information on Jewish militiamen in Stawiski.[81] Poeticbent also downplayed Polish violence toward Jews, writing that the Poles who killed their Jewish neighbors did not do so of their

[80]Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by Lewinowicz, 16:55, March 3, 2011, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&diff=next&oldid=416727434. References are Alexander B. Rossino, "Polish 'Neighbors' and German Invaders: Contextualizing Anti-Jewish Violence in the Białystok District during the Opening Weeks of Operation Barbarossa," *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 16 (2003), footnote no. 58. Yitzhak Arad, *The Partisan: From the Valley of Death to Mount Zion* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979), p. 26f. Lewinowicz added another reference one week later; Dov Levin, *The Lesser of Two Evils: Eastern European Jewry under Soviet Rule, 1939–1941* (University of Nebraska Press, 1995). This edit was made by Lewinowicz, who was a sockpuppet (a false online identity) of Poeticbent. See "Wikipedia:Sockpuppet investigations/Loosmark/Archive," Wikipedia, section 4.2, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Sockpuppet_investigations/Loosmark/Archive&oldid=1089909309#Clerk,_CheckUser,_and/or_patrolling_admin_comments_3.

[81]Rossino mentions "Jewish militia," but not in the context of Stawiski or Radziłów. His mention of Stawiski and Radziłów is on p 434 and relates merely to the Soviet–German conflict. See Rossino, "Polish 'Neighbors' and German Invaders," p. 441. Dov Levin's book also mentions "Jewish militiamen" but not Stawiski or Radziłów. See Levin, *The Lesser of Two Evils*, p. 63. See also Arad, *The Partisan*, pp. 26–27, which mentions Soviet militiamen expelling locals, but there is no indication that they were Jewish, and the place discussed is the Lithuanian town of Swiencany, some 240 miles from Stawiski.

own accord but 'were led to acts of revenge killing in their [the Germans'] presence.'[82] This last claim had no footnote at all. An almost identical falsification occurred in the Wikipedia article on the nearby town of Radziłów, where Poeticbent wrote that 'Soviet-armed Jewish militiamen helped NKVD agents send Polish families into exile.'[83]

Another accusation of Jews killing Poles surfaces in the Wikipedia article 'Naliboki massacre,' which chronicles the killing of 129 Poles by Soviet partisans in May 1943 in Naliboki, a small town in western Belarus. The article insinuates that Jews, specifically the Soviet–Jewish Bielski partisan formation, took part in this massacre. We learn that the partisans numbered 'Jews in their ranks,' that '25% of the partisans were Jewish,' that 'the Bielski partisans … might have supported the Soviets in the attack based on their ongoing relationship,' and that 'surviving eyewitnesses from Naliboki recognized Jews who had previously been in the Bielski partisans participating in the attack.'[84] A previous version of this article was even more explicit in blaming Jews for this atrocity, defining the massacre as 'the mass killing of 128 Poles, including boys, by Soviet and Jewish partisans.'[85] As a reference, an anonymous editor provided a photograph from the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance showing Soviet–Jewish partisans in the Naliboki Forest.[86] In fact, however, the photograph, undated, bears no evident relation to the massacre. Another source backing these statements, inserted by Poeticbent, is an article by Kazimierz Krajewski in an IPN bulletin.[87] Quoting recent IPN publications destined for broad audiences in the context of Jewish–Polish history during the Holocaust is a risky endeavor and requires great vigilance and prudence, and Krajewski, who writes for the Polish far-right press, lacks broader expertise in Jewish–Polish issues.[88]

Wikipedia's insinuation that Jews played a key role in perpetuating this massacre echoes distortions popular among right-wing fringe groups. It began in the early

[82]Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by Lewinowicz, 17:32, March 10, 2011, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&diff=next&oldid=417899518.

[83]This time Poeticbent was using the sockpuppet Matalea. Matalea edits the following in May 2011: Wikipedia article, "Radziłów," diff by Matalea, 3:51, May 23, 2011, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Radzi%C5%82%C3%B3w&type=revision&diff=430453848&oldid=425734291.

[84]Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," Wikipedia, revision from 3:18, April 21, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&oldid=1083850871.

[85]The majority of this text was first inserted by Poeticbent in June 2016: Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," diff by Poeticbent, 15:22, June 26, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&type=revision&diff=727085064&oldid=709272251 and the word "Jewish" was added by an IP user, meaning a user maintaining anonymity, three months later: Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," diff by 77.45.25.112, 09:43, September 13, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&type=revision&diff=739196840&oldid=732407709.

[86]Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," diff by 2600:1001:b127:feeb:b88f:ee62:c6db:3dff, 6:39, February 22, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&diff=next&oldid=827009568. The photograph referenced to is this: Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, RG-33.03.03, 1941–1944, http://lamoth.info/index.php?p=digitallibrary/digitalcontent&id=7843&q=Ghetto±and±camp±currency±.

[87]Wikipedia's reference is Kazimierz Krajewski, "Ginęli, ratując Żydów," *"Opor"? „Odwet"? Czy po prostu „polityka historyczna"? O Żydach w partyzantce sowieckiej na Kresach II RP*," *IPN Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 98 (March 2009): pp. 99–120. Poeticbent first inserted this in 2016: Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," diff by Poeticbent, 19:36, June 25, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&diff=next&oldid=726863016.

[88]Quoted in Jakub Woroncow, "My was wszystkich wydusimy, jak przyjdzie czas," in Paweł Dybicz and Jakub Woroncow, (eds.), *Wyklęci na Podlasiu* (Warsaw: Fundacja Oratio Recta, 2019), p. 149. For a powerful critique of Krajewski's methodology and his defense of nationalistic myths, see Piotr Witek, "Warsztat naukowy historyka w kontekście prób reinterpretacji postaci Romualda Rajsa 'Burego.'" [A Historian's Methodology in the Context of Reinterpretation of the Person of Romuald Rajs aka "Bury"], *ohistorie*, July 27, 2020, https://ohistorie.eu/2020/02/27/mariusz-mazur-warsztat-naukowy-historyka-w-kontekscie-prob-reinterpretacji-postaci-romualda-rajsa-burego/ (accessed September 9, 2022). Kazimierz Krajewski and Grzegorz Wąsowski, "Kapitan Romuald Rajs 'Bury' a Białorusini – fakty i mity," *Glaukopis*, vol. 33 (2016): pp. 93–115.

2000s when the Toronto Branch of the Canadian Polish Congress (KPK), a right-wing group of Polish Canadians, alleged that in Naliboki and Koniuchy (a village in Lithuania), 'Jewish partisans boast[ed] of killing 300 and 130 Poles respectively.'[89] In 2001 the IPN launched an investigation into these two supposedly Jewish-led massacres at the request of the Canadian Polish Congress.[90] Finding nothing, the IPN dismissed the claim years later, stating in 2008 that 'several witnesses testify that there were partisans from Bielski among the attackers,' but that 'these statements are not supported by any other evidence, such as archival documents.'[91] Wikipedia's coverage of the Naliboki massacre should not even mention Jews; yet Jews occupy a third of the article. Various editors over the years tried to fix these edits, but they were brought back by Piotrus and by his like-minded colleague, Volunteer Marek.[92]

The same Wikipedians who distort the historical record also lend a hand in whitewashing current manifestations of Polish antisemitism. This is evident in the Wikipedia article 'Jew with a Coin,' which describes the recent phenomenon of Poles collecting miniatures and paintings of 'Jewish-looking' figures holding money. This kind of artwork features a male character with a beard, dressed in Hasidic clothing, often large-nosed and dark-skinned, and clutching gold coins (Figure 2). In a country where most real Jews were murdered, some precisely because of the stereotype of money-hungry Jews, such objects evoke clear antisemitic stereotypes.[93] Anthropologist Erica Lehrer wrote about this phenomenon in Kazimierz (a center of Jewish life in Kraków) in her 2013 book *Jewish Poland Revisited*, uncovering that some Poles collect these odd pieces of art as good luck charms and may not consciously attribute sinister meaning to them.[94] Yet, since her book's publication, the figurines have turned into a mass trend, making it harder to disavow their antisemitic dimension.[95] More recent scholarship has pointed out that the figurine phenomenon 'seems at first glance to be neutral or even positive disposition but altogether continues and enshrines the well trodden path of anti-Jewish sentiment.'[96] Sensitive to the offensive nature of these objects, the Polish OBI retail chain

[89]Letter from Hanna Sokolski to *National Post*, June 23, 2001, CPC Toronto District – Viewpoints, http://kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/viewpoints_020.html, also found in http://web.archive.org/web/20220907182445/http://kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/viewpoints_020.html.

[90]Marc Perelman, "Poles Open Probe into Jewish Role in Killings," *Forward*, August 8, 2003, https://forward.com/news/7832/poles-open-probe-into-jewish-role-in-killings/. For the Canadian Polish Congress, accusation, see letter from Hanna Sokolski to *National Post*.

[91]"Komunikat dot. śledztwa w sprawie zbrodni popełnionych przez partyzantów sowieckich w latach 1942–1944 na terenie byłego województwa nowogródzkiego," *Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, June 19, 2008, https://ipn.gov.pl/pl/dla-mediow/komunikaty/10278,Komunikat-dot-sledztwa-w-sprawie-zbrodni-popelnionych-przez-partyzantow-sowiecki.html?fbclid=IwAR2_bzQIP5HdXQPg4ARnUp-PkxnR-4NcJZuT_1GGrHhkcZz2-elHlg70zFs.

[92]For Volunteer Marek's edits on Naliboki see Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," diff by Volunteer Marek, 17:40, July 2, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&diff=848554143&oldid=848553318 and Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," diff by Volunteer Marek, 22:24, February 19, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&type=revision&diff=884160980&oldid=884062823. For Piotrus's edits on Naliboki see Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," diff by Piotrus, 10:56, January 16, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&type=revision&diff=936046073&oldid=933544612 and Wikipedia article, "Naliboki massacre," diff by Piotrus, 3:49, February 27, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Naliboki_massacre&type=revision&diff=885293545&oldid=885283718.

[93]For examples of how murderous this stereotype was during the Holocaust, see Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, *Jewish Fugitives in the Polish Countryside, 1939–1945: Beyond the German Holocaust Project* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2022), pp. 275–76.

[94]Erica Lehrer, *Jewish Poland Revisited: Heritage Tourism in Unquiet Places* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 161–63.

[95]I thank Dr. Lehrer for her interview with me, where she explained this point.

[96]Y. Altman et al., "The Online Trade and Consumption of Jewish Figurines and Pictures of Jewish Figures in Contemporary Poland: An Antisemitic Discourse?" in A. Lang et al., (eds.), *Confronting Antisemitism in Modern Media, the Legal and*

Figure 2. 'Jew with a coin' figurine from Wikipedia article.

stopped offering 'Jew with a coin' art in its supermarkets, and Kraków's municipal council, backed by the Jewish community and cultural institutions, issued a public statement against their sale.[97]

On Wikipedia, this disturbing phenomenon is transformed into quaint artwork, thanks to the distortionist editors. A reader stumbling on Wikipedia's take on 'Jew with a Coin' might even mistake this phenomenon for a pro-Jewish portrayal. The article's very first paragraph states, 'The *Jew with a coin* … is a good luck charm in Poland, where images or figurines of the character, usually accompanied by a proverb, are said to bring good fortune, particularly financially. For most Poles the figurines represent a harmless superstition and a positive, sympathetic portrayal of Jewishness.'[98] In one short paragraph, the editors whitewash a clear manifestation of one of the most harmful anti-Jewish prejudices in existence; the association of Jews with money or greed. For a time the article used the phrase 'controversial good luck charm,' at least

Political Worlds (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2021), p. 201. See also Joanna Tokarska-Bakir, "Żyd z pieniążkiem podbija Polskę," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, February 18, 2012, https://wyborcza.pl/7,75410,11172689,zyd-z-pieniazkiem-podbija-polske.html?disableRedirects=true (accessed August 7, 2022).

[97]Ewa Wilczyńska, "OBI wycofuje ze sprzedaży obrazki Żyda z pieniążkiem. To efekt komentarza aktywisty: 'Brzydka gra w stereotypy,'" *Gazeta Wyborcza*, November 30, 2019, https://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,25464090,znana-siec-marketow-wycofuje-obrazki-zyda-z-pieniazkiem-po-apelu.html (accessed August 7, 2022). For more about OBI. see Ofer Aderet, "Calling Them 'Antisemitic Images,' Krakow Bans Sale of Jewish Figurines Holding Coins," *Haaretz*, June 11, 2021, https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/europe/.premium-calling-them-antisemitic-krakow-bans-sale-of-jewish-figurines-holding-coins-1.9896373 (accessed August 7, 2022). For more about Kraków, see Matt Lebovic, "Why 'Lucky Jew' Dolls are More Popular than Actual Jews in Poland," *The Times of Israel*, November 24, 2021, https://www.timesofisrael.com/why-lucky-jew-dolls-are-more-popular-than-actual-jews-in-poland/ (accessed August 7, 2022).

[98]Wikipedia article, "Jew with a Coin," revision from 15:23, November 15, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jew_with_a_coin&oldid=1055381829.

hinting at the figurines' pernicious character, but Piotrus struck 'controversial' from the sentence.[99] A 2015 survey of over 500 adult Poles found that a staggering nineteen percent owned a 'Jew with a coin,' while 55 percent had seen one at a friend's or family member's house.[100] But a Wikipedia editor called MyMoloboaccount, also one of the group, changed the optics of this figure by saying that '*only* 19% of surveyed Poles owned such an item' (emphasis added by authors). MyMoloboaccount and Piotrus together edited the article to say that 'the figurines are not the most popular good luck charm in Poland.'[101] Not for nothing did the two focus their energies on this opening section of the article, called the 'lead,' as readers of Wikipedia often read only that.[102]

Unreliable sourcing

In theory, Wikipedia's policy on sourcing serves as a safeguard against editors who falsify information. The site requires that 'articles should be based on reliable, published sources,'[103] disqualifying data from **un**reliable sources. In most areas of the encyclopedia, this provision serves its function: if an editor comes across an unreliable source, they can remove it, and if another Wikipedian repeatedly restores it, administrators (editors with special privileges) can impose sanctions against the offending party. However, the distortionist editors in the area of Holocaust history in Poland abuse this system by contesting the very definition of reliable research. They spend a considerable amount of time legitimizing nonacademic sources and authors, and, conversely, delegitimizing trustworthy works and authors. So, when uninvolved editors or administrators arrive to settle an editing conflict, they have a hard time telling right from wrong.

Legitimizing fringe academics

Take *The Forgotten Holocaust*, a 1986 book by the aforementioned Richard C. Lukas that borders on Holocaust distortion. Lukas attempted, without any reference to historical evidence from the Polish, Israeli, or German archives, to broaden the definition of the Holocaust in such a way as to also include the killings of ethnic Poles by the Germans. As soon as *The*

[99]Wikipedia article, "Jew with a Coin," diff by Piotrus, October 26, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jew_with_a_coin&diff=1051920530&oldid=1051919724. Piotrus strikes "controversial" and adds most of the rest of the header.

[100]Paweł Dobrosielski, "'Żyd z pieniążkiem' jako praktyka polskiej kultury wernakularnej: Wstępny raport z badań," *Kultura Współczesna*, vol. 3 (2015): p. 73.

[101]Wikipedia article, "Jew with a Coin," diff by MyMoloboaccount, 8:54, October 26, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jew_with_a_coin&diff=1051913209&oldid=1042688472. For MyMoloboaccount saying "only 19%." For MyMoloboaccount adding to the article that they are not very popular, see Wikipedia article, "Jew with a Coin," diff by MyMoloboaccount, May 25, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jew_with_a_coin&diff=next&oldid=898713442 and later Wikipedia article, "Jew with a Coin," diff by MyMoloboaccount, 8:54, October 26, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jew_with_a_coin&type=revision&diff=1051913209&oldid=1042688472. For Piotrus writing that they "are not the most popular good luck charm in Poland," see Wikipedia article, "Jew with a Coin," diff by Piotrus, October 26, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jew_with_a_coin&diff=1051920530&oldid=1051919724. For the current version saying they "aren't popular compared to other good luck charms and rituals," see Wikipedia article, "Jew with a Coin," revision from 00:44, July 1, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jew_with_a_coin&oldid=1095886284.

[102]Daniel Lamprecht et al., "How the Structure of Wikipedia Articles Influences User Navigation," *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*, vol. 23, no. 1 (2017): pp. 29–50, 31–32, 47.

[103]"Wikipedia: Reliable Sources," revision from 14:00, August 2, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reliable_sources.

Forgotten Holocaust came out, David Engel, one of the most eminent historians of the Holocaust, wrote a thirteen-page scathing critique of the book in the journal *Slavic Review*, where he charged Lukas's research with 'distortion, misrepresentation and inaccuracy.'[104] Engel demonstrated in detail that Lukas had made sweeping generalizations, invented facts, disregarded archival sources, and displayed a complete lack of familiarity with secondary sources.

Despite Lukas's clear weaknesses, the editor Piotrus has written him a glowing Wikipedia biography.[105] Piotrus trivializes Engel's critique by juxtaposing it with multiple enthusiastic appraisals of *The Forgotten Holocaust*. 'It has received a number of positive reviews, and a single dissenting critical review,' wrote Piotrus in Richard C. Lukas's biography on Wikipedia.[106] Indeed, Piotrus created a new article dedicated solely to *The Forgotten Holocaust*, where he quoted from the positive reviews in detail. A close look reveals that the laudatory evaluations were written by scholars with far less expertise on the topic than Engel (one of them was a graduate student who never went on to publish in the field; several others were not historians), and most were only one or two pages long. By portraying Engel's opinion as a lone dissenter in a sea of praise, Piotrus massaged the Wikipedia article to show Lukas in a positive light. Another editor called François Robere tried to temper the article's praise for Lukas, but Piotrus reverted him immediately.[107] With 92 percent of the page's content authored by Piotrus, Wikipedia's article on *The Forgotten Holocaust* continues to celebrate Lukas.[108]

The positive biography on Wikipedia enables Piotrus and his colleagues to cite Lukas freely, and so they do. Wikipedia mentions Richard C. Lukas 82 times, more than it mentions Nechama Tec, Samuel Kassow, Doris Bergen, Deborah Dwork, or Zvi Gitelman, to name some well-known experts on Holocaust history. It is telling that the volume of Lukas's citations on Wikipedia is inverse to the volume of citations he enjoys on Google Scholar, a more objective measure of reliability (Chart 3).[109]

In another example of legitimizing weak sources, the distortionist group has extolled the historian Marek Jan Chodakiewicz. Chodakiewicz's 2003 book, *After the Holocaust*, engaged in copious victim blaming, stating, 'violence against Jews stemmed from a variety of Polish responses to at least three distinct phenomena: the actions of Jewish Communists …; the deeds of Jewish avengers …; and the efforts of the bulk of the members of the Jewish community, who attempted to reclaim their property …'[110]

[104]Richard Lukas, *The Forgotten Holocaust* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986). David Engel, "Poles, Jews, and Historical Objectivity," *Slavic Review*, vol. 46, no. 3/4 (1987): pp. 568–80.

[105]XTools Top Edits, Wikipedia Article: "Richard C. Lukas," https://xtools.wmflabs.org/authorship/en.wikipedia.org/Richard%20C.%20Lukas/ (accessed September 2, 2022). As of July 28, 2022, 48 percent of the text in Lukas's biography is authored by Piotrus.

[106]"Richard C. Lukas," diff by Piotrus, 5:47, April 6, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Richard_C._Lukas&type=revision&diff=949387337&oldid=949263322.

[107]François Robere removes review published by Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, Wikipedia article "The Forgotten Holocaust," diff by François Robere, 20:19, April 14, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Forgotten_Holocaust&diff=950969402&oldid=950556421&diffmode=source. Piotrus reverts Robere's removal, Wikipedia article, "The Forgotten Holocaust," diff by Piotrus, 00:51, April 15, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Forgotten_Holocaust&type=revision&diff=951009072&oldid=950969402.

[108]XTools Top Edits, Wikipedia Page: "The Forgotten Holocaust," https://xtools.wmflabs.org/authorship/en.wikipedia.org/The%20Forgotten%20Holocaust/ (accessed September 2, 2022). As of July 28, 2022, 92.3 percent of the text in this article is authored by Piotrus.

[109]These figures were calculated by tallying citation counts on Google Scholar for each historian, and comparing them to the number of mentions on Wikipedia, using https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?search=&title=Special:Search&go=Go Chart data archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish–Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

[110]Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *After the Holocaust* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2003), p. 1.

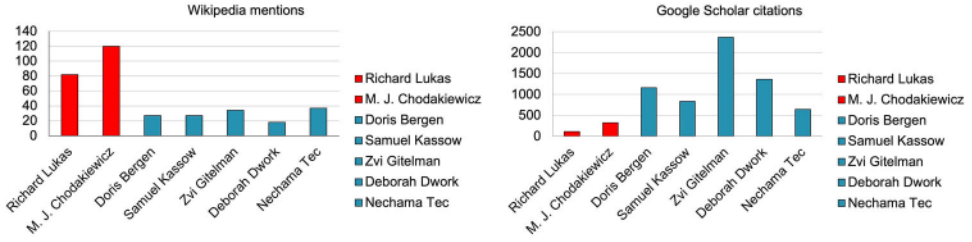

Chart 3. Visibility on Wikipedia vs. on Google Scholar.

Chodakiewicz's 2004 book, *Between Nazis and Soviets*, similarly held Jews responsible for Polish animosity toward them, stating that 'Jewish fugitives had alienated much of the majority population by robbing food and necessities to survive,' and that 'between 1942 and 1944, Jewish supply raids and not Polish antisemitism ultimately determined the nature of mutual relations.'[111] This type of writing garnered scathing critiques from experts in the field, including David Engel, who wrote that Chodakiewicz's work implies that 'the large majority of the Jews who died brought their deaths upon themselves through their own actions' and that Chodakiewicz 'represent[ed] the violence as almost entirely a rejoinder to provocative behavior by the Jews.'[112] Joanna Michlic described Chodakiewicz's work as 'the most extreme spectrum in what is considered the contemporary mainstream ethnonationalist school of history writing.' She explained that he 'consistently casts Polish–Jewish relations in terms of conflict and uses conflict as an explanation and justification of anti-Jewish violence in modern Poland,' and that this interpretation 'neutralize[s] anti-Jewish violence by making it 'guilt free."[113] Laurence Weinbaum shared this critique, writing, 'Chodakiewicz and like-minded historians seem reluctant to forgive the Jews for Jedwabne and the Kielce pogrom, and are hard at work explaining why the murdered—not the murderers—are guilty.'[114]

Chodakiewicz's edited 2012 book *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold*, a crusade against Jan Gross's book *Golden Harvest* from earlier that year, echoed the same tropes.[115] While Gross's book was published by Oxford University Press and won the Sybil Halpern Milton Book Prize, Chodakiewicz's volume was published by Leopolis, a press run by Chodakiewicz himself.[116] It therefore completely flouted academic publishing standards requiring rigorous and blind peer-review, and of its fourteen authors, only seven had

[111] Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939–1947* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), pp. 154–55.
[112] David Engel, "Review of Marek Jan Chodakiewicz 'After the Holocaust: Polish–Jewish Conflict in the Wake of World War II,'" *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, vol. 18 (2007): pp. 424–29.
[113] Joanna Beata Michlic and Małgorzata Melchior, "The Memory of the Holocaust in Post-1989 Poland: Renewal—Its Accomplishments and Its Powerlessness," in John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic, (eds.), *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), p. 433.
[114] Laurence Weinbaum, "Whoever Controls the Past," *Haaretz*, May 22, 2008, https://www.haaretz.com/2008-05-22/ty-article/whoever-controls-the-past/0000017f-e3bb-d804-ad7f-f3fb7efc0000 (accessed August 27, 2022).
[115] Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, (ed.), *Złote serca czy złote żniwa? Studia nad wojennymi losami Polaków i Żydów* (Warsaw: The Facto, 2011).
[116] Leopolis Press states on its webpage, "Dr. Marek Jan Chodakiewicz is the Publisher of Leopolis Press," *The Institute of World Politics*, https://www.iwp.edu/center-for-intermarium-studies/leopolis-press/ (accessed June 14, 2022).

PhDs, only two were faculty at universities (two more worked at the IPN), and one – Mark Paul, on whom we shall expand further on in this essay – maintained anonymity through a pseudonym. Riddled with grammatical errors, *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold* exaggerated Jewish profiteering and collaborationism, downplayed Polish antisemitism, and smeared not only Gross but other prominent historians, such as Piotr Wróbel and John Connelly.[117] In his essay, the pseudonymous 'Mark Paul' dismisses the Grodno pogrom of September 17, 1939, in which close to thirty Jews were murdered by the Polish troops,[118] saying, 'Armed Jews held secret meetings in various areas of Grodno. Jadwiga Dąbrowska witnessed an assault and murder of her neighbor's son, a Polish soldier, killed by a young Jewish participant in such a secret meeting.'[119] Another essay, by Barbara Gorczycka-Muszyńska, argues – against overwhelming evidence – that the Jews returning to Poland after 1945 were privileged in reclaiming their property. Experts on this topic, in contrast, have shown beyond doubt that the entire administrative and judiciary system in 1945–1947 facilitated the final and legal transfer of 'post-Jewish property' (which, after 1942, had been largely taken over by the Polish neighbors) into the hands of ethnic Poles.[120] In his introduction to the volume, Chodakiewicz writes about 'Jewish gangs pulling out gold teeth from the victims at KL [concentration camp] Sachsenhausen, stealing part of the loot for themselves, later enriching the 'chiefs of this enterprise' – the SS guards.'[121]

Chodakiewicz's dislike of minorities extends beyond Jews. In line with European right-wing nationalists who regard the LGBTQ + community as a threat to family and nation,[122] Chodakiewicz has gone on record with blatantly homophobic remarks. 'Nothing offends God more than throwing semen into the feces,' he stated at an IPN event (available to watch on YouTube) held in Warsaw, in July 2019, and went on to claim that his ex-girlfriend, a nurse, once pulled a hamster out of a man's rectum.[123] Chodakiewicz's book *Intermarium* (published by Routledge in 2012) provides a glimpse of his

[117]For more about John Connelly, see Chodakiewicz (ed.), *Złote serca czy złote żniwa*, pp. 269, 274. For Piotr Wróbel, a professor of Polish history at the University of Toronto and here described as "one of the leading Neostalinists," see Ibid., p. 273.

[118]Yehuda Bauer, *The Death of the Shtetl* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 33.

[119]Mark Paul's essay in Mark Chodakiewicz (ed.), *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold* (Washington: Leopolis, 2012), pp. 294–95.

[120]See, for instance: Krzysztof Persak, "Akta postępowań cywilnych z lat 947–49 w sprawach dotyczących zmarłych żydowskich mieszkańców Jedwabnego," in Machcewicz and Persak, (eds.), *Wokół Jedwabnego*, vol. 2, pp. 375–83; Alina Skibińska, "Problemy rewindykacji żydowskich nieruchomości w latach 1944–1950. Zagadnienia ogólne i szczegółowe (na przykładzie Szczebrzeszyna)," in Jan Grabowski and Dariusz Libionka, (eds.), *Klucze i kasa. O mieniu żydowskim w Polsce pod okupacja niemiecka i we wczesnych latach powojennych 1939–1950* (Warsaw: Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów, 2014), pp. 586–88; Anna Cichopek-Gajraj, *Beyond Violence: Jewish Survivors in Poland and Slovakia 1944–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 85. The most complete discussion can be found in Lukasz Krzyżanowski, *Ghost Citizens: Jewish Return to a Postwar City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020), particularly the chapter, "Property," pp. 208–65.

[121]Chodakiewicz, "Introduction," *Golden Harvest*, p. 30.

[122]Richard C. M. Mole, "Nationalism and Homophobia in Central and Eastern Europe," in Koen Slootmaeckers, et al., (eds.), *The EU Enlargement and Gay Politics: The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Rights, Activism and Prejudice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 108–9, 111, 115.

[123]https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-wRldzzUhk see especially the segment from 7'30 to 8'40. See also "Kim jest Marek Chodakiewicz? To on miał zyskać na milionowych kontraktach Polskiej Fundacji Narodowej," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, September 18, 2019, https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,25206407,kim-jest-marek-chodakiewicz-to-on-mial-zyskac-na-milionowych.html?disableRedirects=true (accessed August 7, 2022) and "Wykład pod auspicjami IPN. Chodakiewicz opowiadał m.in. o 'chomiku w odbytnicy,'" *Gazeta.pl*, August 3, 2019, https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,114883,25055910,wyklad-pod-auspicjami-ipn-chodakiewicz-opowiadal-m-in-o-chomiku.html (accessed August 7, 2022).

views. He describes 'homosexual frolic' and 'so-called 'gay pride' parades' as manifestations of 'the EU's radicalism,' and commends countries who 'lead the way' with anti-LGBTQ + policies.[124] Chodakiewicz's homophobic comments dovetail with the official narrative of the Polish authorities which, since 2020, have been actively involved in attacking the LGBTQ + community.[125]

Despite editors repeatedly raising concerns about Chodakiewicz, the distortionist group has adamantly defended using his work as a valid source for Wikipedia content. When confronted with the fact that *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold* bordered on self-publication, Piotrus feebly protested, 'it's … still [an] academic press,' 'the essays seem to be well referenced,' 'no 'red flags' have been identified in the text, i.e. it makes no outlandish claims,' and 'it's a reliable source that can be cited.' Volunteer Marek gave even less of a justification, simply claiming that the volume was 'an academic source and easily qualifies for reliability' and adding, for good measure, 'the notion that it's not reliable is ridiculous.'[126] In 2018, several editors added a number of scathing reviews of Chodakiewicz's work to his Wikipedia biography, not before ensuring that these abided by Wikipedia's policies on 'Biographies of Living Persons' (BLP in Wiki parlance), which requires that criticism of living persons relies on trustworthy sources, takes a conservative and a disinterested tone, and does not represent the views of small minorities.[127] Volunteer Marek deleted them wholesale, citing in his edit summaries (a brief explanation editors need to give for changes they make) 'this article [is] full of BLP vios [violations]' and 'stop trying to turn Wikipedia articles into attack pages on authors whom you disagree with.'[128]

Chodakiewicz's work continues to be cited freely and frequently on Wikipedia. Although enough uninvolved editors weighed in to oppose citing *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold*,[129] his other publications proliferate on Wikipedia far more than works by mainstream scholars. Like Lukas, his numerous mentions on Wikipedia (119

[124]Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Intermarium: The Land Between the Black and Baltic Seas* (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 253.

[125]For homophobic comments of leading Polish politicians, including president Andrzej Duda, see Phillip M. Ayoub, "Attacking LGBT Life Helped the Right-Wing Polish President Win Reelection—Barely," *The Washington Post*, July 21, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/07/21/attacking-lgbt-life-helped-right-wing-polish-president-win-reelection-barely/ (accessed August 30, 2022); Alessio Dellanna and Matthew Holroyd, "LGBT Campaigners Denounce President Duda's Comments on 'Communism,'" *Euronews*, June 15, 2020, https://www.euronews.com/2020/06/15/polish-president-says-lgbt-ideology-is-worse-than-communism (accessed August 30, 2022).

[126]"Wikipedia:Reliable sources/Noticeboard/Archive 266," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard/Archive_266&oldid=924609198#Golden_Harvest_or_Hearts_of_Gold? For more support of *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold* see "Talk:History of the Jews in Poland/Archive 6," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland/Archive_6&oldid=1039197765#Recent_edits_on_Postwar_Property_Restitution.

[127]BLP policy states, "Criticism and praise should be included if they can be sourced to reliable secondary sources, so long as the material is presented responsibly, conservatively, and in a disinterested tone. Do not give disproportionate space to particular viewpoints; the views of small minorities should not be included at all." "Wikipedia: Biographies of Living Persons," Wikipedia, revision from 14:04, July 19, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Biographies_of_living_persons&oldid=1099200134.

[128]Wikipedia article, "Marek Jan Chodakiewicz," diff by Volunteer Marek, 16:33, June 3, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Marek_Jan_Chodakiewicz&diff=next&oldid=844240775. Wikipedia article, "Marek Jan Chodakiewicz," diff by Volunteer Marek, 13:39, November 19, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Marek_Jan_Chodakiewicz&type=revision&diff=869575237&oldid=869566770. For the defense of Chodakiewicz from May 2019, see "Wikipedia:Biographies of living persons/Noticeboard/Archive284," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Biographies_of_living_persons/Noticeboard/Archive284&oldid=1079435550#Marek_Jan_Chodakiewicz.

[129]"Wikipedia:Reliable sources/Noticeboard/Archive 269," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard/Archive_269&oldid=972332501#RfC:_is_%22Golden_Harvest_or_Hearts_of_Gold?%22_an_RS?.

times)[130] bear no relation to his modest visibility outside of the online encyclopedia (Chart 3).

Ewa Kurek provides yet a third example of an unreliable author favored by nationalist-leaning editors. Kurek has made disturbing antisemitic statements, recently describing the spread of COVID-19 in Europe as 'Jewfication.'[131] She is a Holocaust revisionist, as evident from the following excerpt from her recent online publication, *Trudne sąsiedztwo: Polacy i Żydzi ok. 1000–1945* (Difficult Coexistence: Poles and Jews, 1000–1945). 'In 1939–1942 the 'goy' (or Polish) Warsaw was a sad place,' she wrote the following:

> The [Polish] population was terrorized with constant German roundups, executions and deportations to concentration camps. During the same years the Jewish Autonomous Area, the Warsaw ghetto, lived it up. In 1941 Carnival season, in the Warsaw ghetto: in 'Melody Palace' they held a carnival dance featuring a "most beautiful legs" competition. Ghetto dances. Despite the fact that the carnival season is over, in the ghetto they open more and more night bars. On the other [Polish] side [of the wall] people say: "he enjoys himself as if he were in the ghetto." Jewish policemen (who are not drawing any salaries) fill the most elegant venues, in the company of beautiful women. They set the tone for the night entertainment. Their elegant, shining officers' boots must have impressed the ladies. A sort of high point of the life in the Jewish Autonomous Area in Warsaw was the introduction of work-free Saturday (replacing Sunday), as a Jewish day of rest.[132]

This 'Jewish Autonomous Area,' to use Kurek's twisted expression for the Warsaw ghetto (the largest ghetto in Nazi-occupied Europe), was an area in which, in the spring, summer, and fall of 1941, 5,000 people per month starved to death.[133]

Given such blatant falsifications, some in the Wikipedia community reasonably called to reject Kurek as a reliable source, but the distortionist editors came to her defense. In 2018, the editor Icewhiz asked on Wikipedia's Reliable Sources Noticeboard (a space for editors to discuss a source's quality) to have Kurek's work removed from a Wikipedia article. Icewhiz not only pointed out that it was self-published but informed the community about Kurek's absurd claims that Jews enjoyed living in the ghettos. Piotrus pushed back. 'I don't think she is too unreliable to be cited for uncontroversial facts,' he stated, leaving it up to editors to decide what qualified as 'controversial.' He added that 'not every work about Jews in WWII has to focus on their suffering,' and that 'calling her an anti-Semite [*sic*] because she writes about other aspects of Jewish life is IMHO [in my humble opinion] unreasonable.' Tatzref, an editor frequently allied with Piotrus, expressed indignation at the very idea of questioning Kurek. 'So Kurek is a self-published amateur historian??? Does anyone actually do some genuine checking[?]' he exclaimed, his confident tone suggesting that nobody in their right mind would discredit her.[134]

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[130]Search results, "insource:'Chodakiewicz,'" Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Search&limit=500&offset=0&profile=default&search=insource%3A%22Chodakiewicz%22&advancedSearch-current={}&ns0=1 (accessed August 31, 2022).

[131]Hagay Hacohen, "Polish Historian Ewa Kurek: Coronovirus is 'Jewfication' of Europe," *The Jerusalem Post*, May 31, 2020, https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/antisemitism/polish-historian-ewa-kurek-coronavirus-is-jewfication-of-europe-629877 (accessed August 9, 2022).

[132]Ewa Kurek, *Trudne sąsiedztwo: Polacy i Żydzi ok. 1000–1945* (online publication), chapter 27, http://solidarni2010.pl/16685-ewa-kurek-trudne-sasiedztwo-polacy-i-zydzi-ok1000-1945-cz-xxvii.html (accessed February 8, 2022).

[133]Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto. A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 50.

Volunteer Marek described Kurek as a 'mainstream scholar,'[135] while GizzyCatBella inserted her work into more than one article.[136]

Despite Kurek's growing reputation as a Holocaust denier, in August 2021 an editor called Nihil novi once again inserted Kurek into Wikipedia, this time in an article on Jedwabne. The Jedwabne massacre, in which masses of Polish Jews were murdered by Poles on July 10, 1941, has been a sore point for Polish nationalists ever since the publication of Jan T. Gross's book *Neighbors*, which chronicled the mass-murder. Nihil novi presented Kurek as an expert who both rejected the thesis that Poles killed Jews and challenged the high number of victims. 'Kurek … speaks of absurdities in some accounts of the Jedwabne massacre,' wrote Nihil novi, 'such as that Poles shot at the Jews.' Quoting Kurek, he continued,

> the Germans would never have let the Poles use firearms […]. Until there is [a complete] exhumation, it will not be known how many Jews died. Some say 1,600, others 400, still others give different numbers. [S]eeking the perpetrator [before] the body [has been found] is both a legal and a historical absurdity. [Before] we do an exhumation [it will not be known] how many persons died and whether the Jews had been burned [alive] or first shot.[137]

Kurek's assertions are gross falsifications. The Germans did indeed arm Polish peasants in order to create viable 'night guards,' self-protection units which were established across the occupied Generalgouvernement. Usually, the Germans provided the villagers with one to two rifles per village. More importantly, however, there is no evidence of any Jews having been killed with bullets on July 10, 1941. An exhaustive investigation conducted by the IPN itself from 2001 to 2004 (when the IPN still employed noteworthy scholars of Polish–Jewish relations) established beyond any reasonable doubt that the Jewish victims were burned alive in the barn, with many others killed by Poles in the streets and in the houses of Jedwabne.[138] It is true that we shall probably never know the precise number of Jewish victims but that has no impact whatsoever on our understanding of the event. What is known, is that on July 10, 1941, the Polish inhabitants of the town of Jedwabne murdered all the Jewish neighbors they managed to locate.[139] By displaying Kurek's claims uncritically (presenting her neutrally as 'Polish historian Ewa Kurek'), Nihil novi distorted history too, in an article that receives 62,000 views a month.[140]

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[134]"Wikipedia:Reliable sources/Noticeboard/Archive 241," Wikipedia, comment by Tatzref, 4:42, May 16, 2018, and comments by Piotrus, 3:33 and 7:06, May 16, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard/Archive_241&oldid=1085561147#The_Holocaust_in_Poland:_Ewa_Kurek_&_Mark_Paul.

[135]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive236," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 15:13, June 12, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive236&oldid=1079521894#Statement_by_Volunteer_Marek.

[136]Wikipedia article, "Collaboration in German-occupied Poland," diff by 2a01:110f:4505:dc00:803b:5dc9:57af:59f6, April 24, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Collaboration_in_German-occupied_Poland&diff=838089562&oldid=838073708; Wikipedia article, "Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust," diff by GizzyCatBella, 4:50, May 25, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust&diff=842860407&oldid=842817973; "Talk:Polish Righteous Among the Nations," Wikipedia, comment by GizzyCatBella, 06:55, June 7, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Polish_Righteous_Among_the_Nations&oldid=1089894159#Death_Penalty.

[137]Wikipedia article, "Jedwabne Pogrom," diff by Nihil novi, 3:19, August 18, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jedwabne_pogrom&type=revision&diff=1039333591&oldid=1036847816.

[138]Machcewicz and Persak, *Wokół Jedwabnego*.

[139]Interview with Krzysztof Persak for the Museum of Polish History, https://muzhp.pl/pl/e/1759/pogrom-zydow-w-jedwabnem.

[140]On using Wikipedia's voice, see "Wikipedia: Neutral Point of View," Wikipedia, August 3, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Neutral_point_of_view. "Jedwabne_pogrom," Pageviews Analysis, https://pageviews.toolforge.org/?

Alongside Lukas, Chodakiewicz, and Kurek, the nationalist-leaning editors also favor citing *Glaukopis*, a journal which caters to, and is led by, the Polish extreme nationalistic right. Its long-time editor-in-chief, Wojciech Muszyński (an employee of the IPN), openly praises the ONR, one of the most militant, rabidly antisemitic organizations of prewar Poland.[141] In an interview given to the right-wing paper *Nasz Dziennik*, Muszyński, referring to the vicious 1968 antisemitic campaign orchestrated by the communist authorities, falsely claimed that 'it allowed Judeopoles [a term for Jews who pretend to be Poles] with secret-police and communist party-activist roots, to escape responsibility for their committed crimes.'[142] On *Glaukopis*, Muszyński advanced the aforementioned groundless claim that Germans in the Warsaw concentration camp KL Warschau installed gas chambers in which 'mostly Poles from Warsaw were murdered.'[143] *Glaukopis*'s authors include the aforementioned Leszek Żebrowski,[144] as well as Mariusz Bechta (from the IPN),[145] who has published a long list of books by fascist authors. Among these books we find Leon Degrelle's (Hitler's favorite Belgian Nazi) *Appeal to Young Europeans*; a translation of *Rivolta contro il mondo moderno* by the Italian fascist Julius Evola; a manifesto by Jan Mosdorf, the fascist leader of the ONR; a book by Grzegorz Bębnik, 'Ostatnia walka Afrykanerów' (*The Last Struggle of the Afrikaaners)*, which praises the struggles of the white minority in South Africa; and many more publications of the same ilk.[146] Indeed, Bechta is also a vocal admirer of Janusz Waluś (the Polish-born killer of anti-apartheid leader Chris Hani in South Africa) and a former distributor of neo-Nazi music. In 2018, on the 77th anniversary of the German attack against the Soviet Union, Bechta posted on the fan page of *Templum Novum* (a journal published by Bechta himself) a poster calling for solidarity with the Nazis.[147]

Not surprisingly, *Glaukopis* caught the attention of a responsible Wikipedia editor. In February 2021, an editor called Buidhe challenged *Glaukopis*'s reliability on Wikipedia's Reliable Sources Noticeboard. *Glaukopis*, Buidhe pointed out, was described by established historian Andrzej Żbikowski as 'a publication that has arisen mainly to rehabilitate unconditionally the wartime activities of the Narodowe Siły Zbrojne (NSZ).' Seeing as the

project=en.wikipedia.org&platform=all-access&agent=user&redirects=0&start=2021-01&end=2021-12&pages=Jedwabne_pogrom (accessed August 31, 2022).

[141]Wojciech Muszyński, *Duch młodych. Organizacja Polska i Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny w latach 1934–1944. Od studenckiej rewolty do konspiracji niepodległościowej* (Warsaw: IPN, 2011).

[142]Jakub Woroncow, "Współpracownik Dudy chce zrzucać z helikopterów lewicę i tropi 'Judeopolonię' Kim jest dr Muszyński?" *OKO.press*, December 10, 2019, https://oko.press/wspolpracownik-dudy-chce-zrzucac-z-helikopterow-lewice-i-tropi-judeopolonie-kim-jest-dr-muszynski/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR159kA-Fks9Z7PEWBHLPvJ4n2ws8VFm-hvlxcmuo4YI4XDt8JwPtG22jFo (accessed August 30, 2022).

[143]Wojciech J. Muszyński, "Komory gazowe w KL Warschau. Raporty Centrali Służby Wywiadowczej Dowództwa NSZ o zainstalowaniu w Warszawie niemieckich komór gazowych (1943)," *Glaukopis*, vol. 15–16 (2009): pp. 314–20.

[144]Kazimierz Krajewski and Leszek Żebrowski, "Nieprawdziwa historia braci Bielskich. Komentarz historyczny," *Glaukopis*, vol. 15–16 (2009): pp. 107–126; Leszek Żebrowski, "(Po)marcowe mistyfikacje," *Glaukopis*, vol. 11–12 (2008): pp. 371–81.

[145]Mariusz Bechta, "Pogrom czy odwet? Akcja zbrojna WiN w Parczewie (5 lutego 1946 r.)," *Glaukopis*, vol. 25–26 (2012): pp. 54–102.

[146]Przemysław Witkowski, "Dr Bechta z IPN: gratulacje dla Walusia, nazistowskie zespoły i wybielanie żołnierzy 'wyklętych,'" *OKO.press*, January 6, 2020, https://oko.press/bechta-z-ipn-gratulacje-dla-walusia-nazistowskie-zespoly/ (accessed August 30, 2022).

[147]Jakub Woroncow, "Specjaliści od fałdzowania przeszłości," *Tygodnik Przegląd*, July 2, 2018, https://www.tygodnikprzeglad.pl/specjalisci-falszowania-przeszlosci/ (accessed August 7, 2022); Maciej Chołodowski, "Skrajna prawica i IPN wybielają 'Burego'. Opinia, ale bez nowego śledztwa?" *Gazeta Wyborcza*, March 12, 2019, https://bialystok.wyborcza.pl/bialystok/7,35241,24540241,skrajna-prawica-i-ipn-wybielaja-burego-opinia-ale-bez-nowego.html (accessed August 7, 2022).

NSZ was the military wing of Polish extreme nationalists, one of whose units, the Holy Cross Brigade, signed a truce with the Nazis, fought against Soviet forces and left-wing partisans, and murdered Jews, Buidhe rightly noted that *Glaukopis* was simply not a reliable source to use. The nationalist group on Wikipedia responded with a fierce defense of *Glaukopis*. It was reliable, claimed MyMoloboaccount, adding, 'Peer reviewed, includes notable cited historians, involved with notable scholarly debates.' Volunteer Marek agreed that 'this [journal] shouldn't be a concern,' and GizzyCatBella wrote that 'Glaukopis is an obvious peer-reviewed scholarly publication.'[148] Outnumbered, Buidhe lost this debate and *Glaukopis* remained a permitted source on Wikipedia. Indeed, the nationalist-leaning group uses it to justify other unreliable sources, as in the case of Piotrus embellishing Ewa Kurek's Wikipedia biography.[149]

In their effort to argue for *Glaukopis's* reliability, the distortionist group whitewashed the Wikipedia biography of its editor-in-chief, Muszyński. This man gained notoriety in 2015 for posting on his Facebook page a drawing of Barack Obama with a noose around his neck (Figure 3),[150] and once again in 2019 for writing on his Facebook page that members of the left-leaning Polish Razem party should be, following the example from Pinochet's Chile, 'brought in helicopters over the ocean and thrown out there, 30 kilometers from the shore.'[151] In September 2020 and February 2021, Buidhe and a user called Jacinda01 added these facts to Muszyński's Wikipedia biography, using the mainstream Polish newspapers *OKO Press* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* as their sources. Yet Volunteer Marek, evidently intent on clearing Muszyński's reputation, deleted them, dismissing *OKO Press* and *Gazeta Wyborcza* as unreliable sources.[152] Even when it was pointed out in the Reliable Sources Noticeboard that *The Washington Post* considered *Gazeta Wyborcza* 'Poland's most popular and respected newspaper' and that *OKO Press* received a Freedom of Expression Award from the British organization Index on Censorship, Volunteer Marek and GizzyCatBella claimed both outlets were 'hyper partisan outlets' and 'NOT reliable.'[153] For several months, the two kept deleting other editors' attempts to bring Muszyński's racist and violent pronouncements into the biography.[154]

[148]"Wikipedia:Reliable sources/Noticeboard," comments by MyMoloboaccount (15:04, February 4, 2021), Volunteer Marek (17:23, February 4, 2021), and GizzyCatBella (17:29, February 4, 2021), Wikipedia, section 28, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard&oldid=1004841844#Glaukopis_journal.

[149]Wikipedia article, "Ewa Kurek," diff by Piotrus, 9:48, June 7, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ewa_Kurek&type=revision&diff=900739251&oldid=900528869.

[150]Wojciech Czuchnowski, "Narodowiec od Kukiza kandydatem do Kolegium IPN. Pracuje w IPN, rozpowszechnia rysunki z Obama na stryczku," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, June 23, 2016, https://wyborcza.pl/1,75398,20287365,narodowiec-od-kukiza-kandydatem-do-kolegium-ipn-pracuje-w-ipn.html (accessed August 7, 2022). A nationalist from Kukiz, he is a candidate for the College of the Institute of National Remembrance. He works at the Institute of National Remembrance, distributes drawings with Obama on a noose, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, June 23, 2016.

[151]Estera Flieger, "Pracownik IPN: Za Pinocheta członkowie Razem zostaliby helikopterami przewiezieni nad ocean," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, December 13, 2019, https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,25511839,pracownik-ipn-za-pinocheta-czlonkowie-razem-zostaliby-helikopterami.html (accessed August 7, 2022).

[152]See the September 2020 Buidhe edit, Wikipedia article, "Wojciech Muszyński," diff by Buidhe, 13:06, September 19, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wojciech_Muszy%C5%84ski&type=revision&diff=979210752&oldid=949549263. Volunteer Marek deleted Buidhe's paragraph in February 2021. See Wikipedia article, "Wojciech Muszyński," diff by Volunteer Marek, 2:52, February 8, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wojciech_Muszy%C5%84ski&type=revision&diff=1005520946&oldid=1004138639. February 2021 Bob not snob (an Icewhiz sock: "User:Bob not snob,") diff by Beeblebrox, 1:12, October 20, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Bob_not_snob&diff=1050809659&oldid=942859904) adds *Gazeta Wyborcza*: Wikipedia article "Wojciech Muszyński," diff by Bob not snob, 7:47, February 8, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wojciech_Muszy%C5%84ski&type=revision&diff=1005553326&oldid=1005520946 but Volunteer Marek deletes it. See Wikipedia article, "Wojciech Muszyński," diff by Volunteer Marek, 8:56, February 8, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wojciech_Muszy%C5%84ski&diff=next&oldid=1005553326.

Figure 3. An image from Wojciech Muszyński's Facebook page in 2015, showing Obama's head in a noose.

It was only after the fourth attempt by other editors to include the paragraphs on Obama and Razem that GizzyCatBella and Volunteer Marek finally stood down.[155] Still, Muszyński's biography, over 50 percent of which is authored by Piotrus,[156] continues to read as a list of accolades. While GizzyCatBella and Volunteer Marek guard that page, few editors are likely to attempt any major changes, or participate in discussion of sources.

Another absurd source legitimized by the distortionist group is Mark Paul. This author appears to be a legitimate historian at first glance, with relevant publications in Holocaust history. In fact, 'Mark Paul' does not exist, a fact known to every scholar familiar with the historiography on the Holocaust in Poland; it is the pseudonym of an author – perhaps several authors – who pens lengthy online documents riddled with antisemitic clichés and stereotypes.[157] Mark Paul texts have appeared, predictably, in *Glaukopis*,[158] as well as on the website of the aforementioned far-right-wing Toronto branch of the Canadian Polish Congress. Some of his texts appear published, such as *Neighbours on the Eve of the Holocaust*, which bears the imprint of Toronto-based Pefina Press. Short for Polish Educational Foundation in North America, Pefina has no apparent editorial board, peer-review process, or even contact details, and its authors include mostly

[153]"Wikipedia:Reliable sources/Noticeboard," Wikipedia, comments by Volunteer Marek, 13:44, February 8, 2021, and GizzyCatBella,18:02, February 8, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard&oldid=1005633742#Gazeta_Wyborcza_and_OKO.press.

[154]GizzyCatBella removes Obama and Razem content: 19:31, 16 February 2021, 10:19 18 June 2021, and 10:22, June 18, 2021. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wojciech_Muszy%C5%84ski&action=history.

[155]Trasz reverts Volunteer Marek in December 2021, Wikipedia article, "Wojciech Muszyński," diff by Trasz, 17:25, December 27, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wojciech_Muszy%C5%84ski&type=revision&diff=1062306939&oldid=1032703925.

[156]XTools Top Edits, Article: Wojciech Muszyński, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/authorship/en.wikipedia.org/Wojciech%20Muszy%C5%84ski/ as of June 13, 2022 (accessed September 2, 2022).

[157]Ironically, this has been admitted by Chodakiewicz himself, who published Mark Paul's two essays in his *Golden Harvest or Hearts of Gold*. Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, "Tajemniczy Mark Paul," *tysol.pl*, March 20, 2019, https://www.tysol.pl/a30530--Tylko-u-nas-Marek-Jan-Chodakiewicz-Tajemniczy-Mark-Paul.

[158]Mark Paul, "Polskie podziemie a Żydzi: korekta obrazu," *Glaukopis*, vol. 25–26 (2012): p. 103. For more mentions of Mark Paul on *Glaukopis*, see the Google search https://www.google.com/search?&q=site%3Ahttps%3A%2F%2Fglaukopis.pl%2F%20%22mark%20paul%22, (accessed July 29, 2022). *Glaukopis* lists Mark Paul as a contributor on "Our Contributors," *Glaukopis*, https://glaukopis.pl/wspolpracuja/, (accessed July 29, 2022).

Mark Paul and Piotrowski.[159] Moreover, unlike actual academic publications, the Canadian Polish Congress changes the text of *Neighbours on the Eve of the Holocaust* every year or two, adding hundreds of references to each updated edition.[160] Inflating Mark Paul texts with footnotes (1,609 in the most recent version of *Neighbours*) raises their visibility, because a Google search for other titles – those in the footnotes – leads to his work.

Mark Paul's work, defended by the nationalist group of editors, epitomizes Holocaust distortion. A short excerpt from *Neighbours on the Eve of the Holocaust* shows its blatant falsifications. 'A fairly clear outline emerges of some sordid and shameful aspects of the conduct of Jews vis-à-vis their Polish neighbours under Soviet rule,' writes Mark Paul.

> It is an immensely important story that has never before been told and one that redefines the history of wartime Polish–Jewish relations. There is overwhelming evidence that Jews played an important, at times pivotal role, in arresting hundreds of Polish officers and officials in the aftermath of the September 1939 campaign and in deporting thousands of Poles to the Gulag. Collaboration in the destruction of the Polish state, and in the killing of its officials and military, constituted de facto collaboration with Nazi Germany, with which the Soviet Union shared a common, criminal purpose and agenda in 1939–1945.[161]

The author (or authors) repeat a tired antisemitic canard of alleged Jewish complicity with the Soviet regime. What they tend to forget is that, statistically, Polish Jews were the most targeted group among the former Polish citizens deported by the Soviets to Siberia during the 1939–1941 period.[162] Furthermore, the alleged massive scale of Jewish participation in Soviet militias was based on perceptions, rather than facts; in the eyes of Polish observers, the shock at seeing Jews in police uniforms, practically impossible in prewar Poland, created a false impression of a massive scale of the phenomenon.

The discussion of Mark Paul as a source on Wikipedia exemplifies once again the nationalist-leaning editors' resolve to redefine the very notion of reliable research. As in the case of Kurek and *Glaukopis*, a handful of Wikipedians asked to have Mark Paul disqualified from Wikipedia. In a 'Request for Comment,' a Wikipedia process for solving content disagreements, Icewhiz asked other editors for their thoughts. The editor, K.e.coffman, urged against citing Mark Paul, pointing out that 'he's published

[159]See Worldcat results for "Polish Educational Foundation in North America," and "Pefina," https://www.worldcat.org/search?qt=worldcat_org_all&q=%22polish±educational±foundation±in±north±america%22 (accessed January 25, 2022).

[160]Mark Paul, *Neighbours on the Eve of the Holocaust: Polish–Jewish Relations in Soviet-Occupied Eastern Poland, 1939–1941* (Toronto: PEFINA Press). Several versions have appeared, some of which are no longer hosted on KPK's website but have been preserved elsewhere online. The earliest version we could find is from 2010 (337 pages), available at https://studylib.net/doc/8052017/neighbours. For the 2013 version (413 pages), see https://silo.tips/download/neighbours-on-the-eve-of-the-holocaust. For the 2017 version (451 pages), see http://kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/SOV-OCC-39-41-UNEDITED-1.doc. For the 2018 version (462 pages), see http://kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/Neighbours-on-the-Eve-of-the-Holocaust.pdf. For the 2019 version (417 pages), see http://kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/Neighbours-on-the-Eve-of-the-Holocaust-1.pdf. For the 2021 version (504 pages), see http://kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/SOV-OCC-39-41-UNEDITED-2.doc.

[161]Paul, *Neighbours*, 2017 version, p. 14, http://kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/SOV-OCC-39-41-UNEDITED-1.doc.

[162]Jan Tomasz Gross, *Revolution from Abroad* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 196–98. The three major Soviet deportations (1940–1941) encompassed varying numbers of Jews, along with some Ukrainians and Byelorussians. The ethnic distribution for all deportations has been estimated at 52 percent Poles, 30 percent Jews (while the Jews made up 10 percent of the total population), and 18 percent others. Yanina Karpenkina, "Советизация еврейского населения Западной Белоруссии (1939–1941 гг.)" [Sovietization of the Jewish Population of Western Belorussia, (1939–1941 gg.)], PhD diss., НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ, «ВЫСШАЯ ШКОЛА ЭКОНОМИКИ» [National Research University, Graduate School of Economy], Moscow, 2018, p. 104.

by the non-peer-reviewed PEFINA Press … a WP:QS [Wikipedia-defined questionable source] publisher,' adding, 'Paul does not appear to have credentials as a historian, so I would consider him to be WP:QS author.'[163] Editor François Robere agreed, explaining,

> [Mark Paul is] virtually unknown outside of a narrow circle of Polish writers, some contested themselves. His citation count on [Google] Scholar is two … and AFAIK [as far as I know] he never published outside Glaukopis, which is an issue both in its own right as well as because Glaukopis itself is questionable. He presented no conference papers that I'm aware of.[164]

Yet once again, the distortionist editors rallied in defense of revisionism. Tatzref claimed that 'Mark Paul's publications are thoroughly documented and rely on copious sources' and that 'the evidence for inclusion is overwhelming.'[165] GizzyCatBella declared that 'Mark-Paul is one of the greatest Polish-Canadian historian [*sic*] dedicated to this particular topic, accepted by virtually every relevant gate of interest.'[166] Piotrus echoed his colleagues, saying, 'I think it is fine to link his works,' and when pushed on the point, weakly conceded, as he did on Kurek, that Mark Paul's work should be 'avoid[ed] for controversial claims' but that 'Paul is acceptable as a source for non-controversial statements.'[167] In this dispute, enough uninvolved editors weighed in to tip the scale against the nationalist-leaning group. The discussion closed in July 2018 with a determination that Mark Paul should not be used.[168]

On the face of it, Wikipedia's safeguard against questionable sources had worked; Mark Paul was not supposed to be cited again following the July 2018 Request for Comment. The nationalist-leaning editors, however, found workarounds. In February 2019, Tatzref added a paragraph to the 'History of the Jews in Poland' article, taken from one and the same, Mark Paul.[169] The paragraph claimed that Jewish survivors, upon returning to their homes after liberation, had an easy time reclaiming the property they had lost. 'An expedited court process entailing minimal costs was put in place to handle claims,' wrote Tatzref, 'many claims were processed the day they were filed,'

[163]"Talk: Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust/Archive 4," Wikipedia, comment by K.e.coffman, 00:45, May 9, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard/Archive_241&oldid=1085561147#Discussion_(Paul;_Kurek).

[164]"Talk: Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust/Archive 4," Wikipedia, comment by François Robere, 10:00, May 31, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust/Archive_4&oldid=1056914175#RFC:_Inclusion_of_list_of_towns_and_villages_sourced_to_self-published_Mark_Paul,_and_placing_Mark_Paul's_documents_in_the_Bibliography.

[165]"Talk: Hunt for the Jews," Wikipedia, comment by Tatzref, 16:24, May 13, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Hunt_for_the_Jews&oldid=1006140051#Mark_Paul_as_a_source.

[166]"Talk:Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust/Archive 4," Wikipedia, GizzyCatBella, 7:05, May 30, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust/Archive_4&oldid=1056914175#RFC:_Inclusion_of_list_of_towns_and_villages_sourced_to_self-published_Mark_Paul,_and_placing_Mark_Paul's_documents_in_the_Bibliography.

[167]"Talk: Hunt for the Jews," Wikipedia, comment by Piotrus, 5:05, May 13, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Hunt_for_the_Jews&oldid=1006140051#Mark_Paul_as_a_source; "Wikipedia:Reliable sources/Noticeboard/Archive 241," Wikipedia, comments by Piotrus, 03:33, May 16, 2018 and 03:42, May 17, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard/Archive_241&oldid=1085561147#The_Holocaust_in_Poland:_Ewa_Kurek_&_Mark_Paul.

[168]"Talk:Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust/Archive 4," Wikipedia, comment by GRuban, 16:13, July 30, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust/Archive_4&oldid=1056914175#RFC:_Inclusion_of_list_of_towns_and_villages_sourced_to_self-published_Mark_Paul,_and_placing_Mark_Paul's_documents_in_the_Bibliography.

[169]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Tatzref, 16:37, February 22, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=884586715&oldid=883454053.

and 'thousands of properties were successfully reclaimed.' Poles tried to help, so they 'often served as witnesses to corroborate claims of Jewish neighbors and acquaintances,' while Jews robbed Poles by 'advancing fraudulent property claims.' Although the text did not once reference Mark Paul (doing so would have breached the Request for Comment), careful examination shows Tatzref plagiarized this paragraph from a Mark Paul online essay, 'A Tangled Web: Polish–Jewish Relations in Wartime Northeastern Poland and the Aftermath.'[170] Contrary to Mark Paul's claims, the process of reclaiming property was fraught with deadly risks. Returning Jews faced widespread violence, especially when they tried to reclaim their property from Poles. Between 1,200 and 2,000 Jews were killed during the 1945–1947 period, and recent research confirms that antisemitism and greed often lay at the root of murderous acts.[171] When editors tried to correct the Mark Paul content, however, the distortionist group once again rallied. One editor removed the paragraph,[172] but Piotrus reinserted it, stating, 'I don't see any red flags in this.'[173] Next another editor, Yaniv, tried to remove it, explaining that to leave it in amounted to 'antisemitic vandalism.'[174] Volunteer Marek reverted that deletion and claimed that to call it 'antisemitic vandalism' amounted to a 'personal attack' against the editors who supported it (administrator Tony Ballioni accepted this claim and blocked Yaniv immediately).[175] Icewhiz eventually managed to replace the paragraph with findings supported by actual scholarship,[176] but the effort required to counter the distortionist group was monumental, a point we expand on below.

[170]See Mark Paul, "A Tangled Web," available on the website of the KPK. It is listed at http://www.kpk-toronto.org/obrona-dobrego-imienia/ and viewable at http://www.kpk-toronto.org/wp-content/uploads/Tangled-Web-3-3.doc, both (accessed December 28, 2022). A portion of Mark Paul's piece is also archived in https://docplayer.pl/101367406-Excerpted-from-a-tangled-web-polish-jewish-relations-in-wartime-northeastern-poland-and-the-aftermath-part-3-by-mark-paul.html. Tatzref's plagiarism was in the form of close paraphrasing. Compare Tatzref's sentence "Poles often served as witnesses to corroborate claims of Jewish neighbors and acquaintances" with Mark Paul's "a great many Poles came forward as witnesses on behalf of Jews in property claims filed by Jewish survivors"; Tatzref's "Jewish law firms and agencies outside Poland specialized in submitting applications on behalf of non-residents" with Mark Paul's "many of these claims were pursued by Jewish organizations and foreign firms using Jewish lawyers"; Tatzref's "many claims were processed the day they were filed" with Mark Paul's' "the claims were often processed by local courts on the day they were filed"; Tatzref's "there were a number of cases of Jews advancing fraudulent property claims" with Mark Paul's "there were frequent cases of individual and groups of Jews misappropriating Jewish property by making fraudulent claims"; Tatzref's "thousands of properties were successfully reclaimed" with Mark Paul's "thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of properties were reclaimed by Jews without incident." For more detail on the similarity between Tatzref's additions and Mark Paul, see "Wikipedia: Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive248," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive248&oldid=1079521824#Tatzref and "User:Icewhiz/Illustration," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User:Icewhiz/Illustration&oldid=885631665.

[171]Julian Kwiek, *Nie chcemy Żydów u siebie. Przejawy wrogości wobec Żydów w latach 1944-45*, (Warsaw: Nieoczywiste, 2021); Andrew Kornbluth, *The August Trials: The Holocaust and Postwar Justice in Poland*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021); J. Tokarska-Bakir, *Pod klątwą, Społeczny portret pogromu kieleckiego* (Warsaw: Czarna Owca, 2020).

[172]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Icewhiz, 6:23, February 23, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=prev&oldid=884674904.

[173]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Piotrus, 15:34, February 23, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=884675297.

[174]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by 1:59 ,יניב הורוץ, February 24, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=884762890

[175]Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Volunteer Marek, 6:36, February 24, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=884798049, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%91_%D7%94%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9F&oldid=1079454319#Offensive_and_false_edit_summaries. TonyBallioni, persuaded by Volunteer Marek's argument, blocked Yaniv indefinitely. "User talk:יניב הורוץ," diff by TonyBallioni, 07:07 and 07:24, February 24, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk%3A%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%91_%D7%94%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9F&type=revision&diff=884825662&oldid=884822034.

Discrediting historians

Alongside citing and praising fringe academics, the nationalist group on Wikipedia also tries to discredit reputable scholars. This takes place primarily in talk pages and noticeboards, spaces where editors debate sources and ask uninvolved editors and administrators to weigh in on disagreements. The nationalist-leaning editors regularly lambast Jan T. Gross, professor emeritus at Princeton University and arguably the world's leading historian of wartime and postwar Poland. GizzyCatBella has stated that 'Gross is known for making absurd statements,' that he is 'considered the most criticized historians [*sic*] in Poland, probed and rejected by virtually everyone,' and, responding to a critique of Mark Paul, that 'Gross is fringe not M. Paul.' Nihil novi joined in, arguing, 'Professor Gross … betrays poor judgment and a surprising ignorance of what was happening under the German occupation.'[177]

Critiques of respectable scholars abound. Referring to Christopher Browning, one of the world's top Holocaust scholars, Volunteer Marek stated, 'Browning does write some grade-A nonsense.'[178] When an editor quoted Browning's finding that 'those associated with the AK [Armia Krajowa], Poland's conservative nationalist underground Home Army, usually rejected [Jewish partisans],'[179] Volunteer Marek retorted, 'any source which describes AK as 'conservative nationalist' is garbage. Yes, that applies to Christopher Browning.' Browning, continued Volunteer Marek, was 'a pretty good example' of someone 'clueless about any history that doesn't involve the British or the Americans.'[180] Xx236 called Berel Lang, professor emeritus at SUNY Albany, a 'propaganda writer.'[181] This bludgeoning of top-rate scholarship occurs on talk pages and noticeboards, far from the public eye, but they end up profoundly impacting what the public reads. Voiced with such confidence, these critiques manipulate uninvolved editors, including Wikipedia administrators, who

[176]Icewhiz reverted Volunteer Marek only to be re-reverted by Galassi, prompting administrator TonyBallioni to impose a month-long edit freeze on the article in response to the edit war. When the freeze ended, Icewhiz replaced the Mark Paul material with actual scholarship, most of which remains in the article as of the time of writing this. Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Icewhiz, 7:03, February 24, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=884821883; Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Galassi, 13:55, February 24, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=884824087; Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Galassi, 13:55, February 24, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&dhttps://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=885094737iff=next&oldid=884824087; Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," Wikipedia, revision from 23:34, January 18, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&oldid=1066558514

[177]"Talk:Collaboration with the Axis powers/Archive 5," Wikipedia, comment by GizzyCatBella, 23:01, February 17, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Collaboration_with_the_Axis_powers/Archive_5&oldid=1064750416#PLEA_TO_ALL_LATELY_INVOLVED_EDITORS. "Talk:Rescue of Jews by Poles during the Holocaust/Archive 4," Wikipedia, comments by GizzyCatBella, 8:23, May 30, 2018 and Nihil novi, 14:05, May 30, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Rescue_of_Jews_by_Poles_during_the_Holocaust/Archive_4&oldid=1056914175#RFC:_Inclusion_of_list_of_towns_and_villages_sourced_to_self-published_Mark_Paul,_and_placing_Mark_Paul's_documents_in_the_Bibliography.

[178]"Wikipedia:Reliable sources/Noticeboard/Archive 243," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard/Archive_243&oldid=1079428852#David_Cesarani_at_Psychology_Press_(Taylor_&_Francis_Group)_and_Christopher_Browning_(W._W._Norton_&_Company).

[179]Christopher Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), p. 252.

[180]"Talk:Jewish partisans," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 15:17, June 11, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jewish_partisans&oldid=1089889699#Misrepresentation_of_the_Home_army%27s_relationship_with_Jewish_partisan_and_NOENG.

[181]"Talk:Ewa Kurek," diff by Xx236, 6:45, May 18, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Ewa_Kurek&diff=841811592&oldid=841811341&diffmode=source.

have no way of recognizing their absurdity or sift through evidence in a case on editor misconduct, could be misled by these baseless accusations and actually start to think that Browning and Gross are on an equal footing with Mark Paul or Ewa Kurek.

While the most vicious assaults on scholars remain behind the scenes, some attacks take place in public-facing articles. In one case, Piotrus inserted unwarranted criticism into the Wikipedia biography of established Holocaust historian Antony Polonsky, a professor at Brandeis University and editor of the journal *Polin*, who publicly supported Jan T. Gross and opposed Chodakiewicz's work.[182] In April 2012, an editor called Mick gold created a Wikipedia biography on Polonsky, detailing his career, research themes, and major publications. The article's layout was standard for what Wikipedia calls BLPs, biographies of living persons.[183] Eight days later, however, Poeticbent 'tagged' the article as too flattering of Polonsky, and Piotrus demanded 'more critical' reviews of the historian on the article's talk page.[184]

Piotrus asked for the biography to include scathing remarks about Polonsky made by one Peter Stachura, at one time affiliated with the University of Stirling and on the board of *Glaukopis*.[185] Stachura's writing, particularly on Poland's Ukrainian and Jewish minorities, is riddled with manipulations. To him, prewar Polish Jews were not a fragile minority trying to fend off economic and social threats posed by the Polish state and society, but a force as strong, if not stronger, than the ethnic majority. This is evident in his statements, such as 'anti-Semitism and anti-Polonism were much in evidence, each perniciously reinforcing the other' and 'Jewish polonophobia was as powerfully on display as Polish anti-semitism.' The Jews were to blame for their own misery, Stachura implied when he wrote, 'Jews certainly met with resentment because of their predominant role in industry, commerce, banking and several liberal professions, including the law and medicine,' and 'most Jews did not want to mix with their Polish neighbors … For them, the state and the Poles were objects of contempt and antipathy.' In blatant revisionism, Stachura denied the anti-Jewish violence which shook Poland in 1937–1939, following the Endecja-driven boycott of Jewish commerce. He claimed instead, 'anti-Semitism in Poland was invariably of a non-violent type.'[186] Not surprisingly, Stachura is practically unknown in the field of Polish–Jewish history. No reviews of his work have appeared in scholarly journals devoted to Jewish–Polish history, Jewish history, or the history of the Holocaust.

Piotrus likely did not know all this about Stachura, but he was aware of the contents of Stachura's criticism of Polonsky. Stachura's letter was laced with antisemitic statements, such as calling Brandeis (which is explicitly nonsectarian) a 'Jewish university' and

[182]Joanna B. Michlic and Antony Polonsky, "Letter to the Editor," *History*, vol. 93, no. 1 (2008): pp. 154–58, http://www.jstor.org/stable/24428687.

[183]Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," Wikipedia, revision from 11:38, April 19, 2012, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&oldid=488154969.

[184]Poeticbent tag, "Antony Polonsky," diff by Poeticbent, 1:17, April 27, 2012; https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&type=revision&diff=489403977&oldid=488959872. Piotrus comment on talk page asking to include Stachura: "Talk:Antony Polonsky," Wikipedia, comment by Piotrus, 16:33, April 29, 2012, "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Antony_Polonsky&oldid=1089883221#Tags. Piotrus NPOV tag: "Antony Polonsky," diff by Piotrus, 16:16, May 17, 2012, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&type=revision&diff=493046361&oldid=493039120.

[185]*Glaukopis*, archived on the Internet Archive WayBack Machine, https://web.archive.org/web/20140503202619/http://glaukopis.pl/?page_id=222 (accessed August 31, 2022).

[186]Peter Stachura, *Poland Between the Wars, 1918–1939* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1999), p. 77; Peter Stachura, *Poland in the Twentieth Century* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1999), p. 76. Peter Stachura, *Poland, 1918-1945: An Interpretive and Documentary History of the Second Republic* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 87.

labeling *Polin* a 'Jewish-funded' publication.[187] Furthermore, Stachura did not actually manage to publish his letter; he sent it to the British journal, *History*, but they rejected it, so Stachura found a home for his letter, tellingly on the *Glaukopis* website, where he was a board member. Understandably, Mick Gold hesitated to add Stachura's letter to Polonksy's biography. Piotrus applied pressure by tagging the article as biased ('since no criticism has been added, I have to tag this article as non-neutral,' he wrote), adding a banner at the top of the article reading 'the neutrality of this article is disputed.' When an editor called Voceditenore pointed out the letter's complete unreliability – it was not even published by *Glaukopis*, she explained, but merely hosted on their website – Piotrus insisted, saying, 'I don't see why Stachura's letter is unreliable.'[188] Piotrus offered what he presented as a neutral compromise, setting up a false equivalence between mainstream scholars of Jewish–Polish history like Polonsky and fringe academics like Stachura: 'Perhaps the correct, neutral way of writing about this situation is to note that Polonsky belongs to one of the two groups of scholars on Polish–Jewish history, each highly critical of another.'[189] Piotrus finally got his way as Mick Gold incorporated Stachura's criticism of Polonsky in June 2012.[190]

For seven years, this critique – unreliable by both academic standards and Wikipedia policy – remained in place in Polonsky's Wikipedia biography and was viewed over 12,000 times.[191] In May 2019, Icewhiz removed Stachura's letter, but less than twelve hours later, Volunteer Marek, an expert at aggressive edit reverts, reinstated it. Icewhiz then took it out again, and Volunteer Marek put it back in again. Finally, he agreed to delete it,[192] but only after Icewhiz warned him[193] that leaving in Stachura's remarks violated Wikipedia's Biographies of Living Persons policy, which administrators take seriously. This policy prohibits inserting into Wikipedia 'contentious material about

[187]Letter from Peter D. Stachura to Antony Polonsky and Joanna Michlic, February 6, 2008, archived on the Internet Archive WayBack Machine, (accessed August 31, 2022), https://web.archive.org/web/20120425142848/http://glaukopis.pl/pdf/czytelnia/JedwabneReplyToAntonyPolonsky.pdf. It was later removed from *Glaukopis's* website; therefore we provide the web archive link.

[188]Piotrus removing NPOV tag after Mick Gold's addition of Stachura: Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," diff by Piotrus, 18:53, June 13, 2012, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&type=revision&diff=497435884&oldid=497417760; "Talk:Antony Polonsky," Wikipedia, comments by Voceditenore, 10:35, May 22, 2012 and Piotrus, 16:39, May 22, 2012, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Antony_Polonsky&oldid=1089883221#Criticism.

[189]"Talk:Antony Polonsky," diff by Piotrus, 15:55, May 24, 2012, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Antony_Polonsky&diff=494168557&oldid=494120737.

[190]Mick Gold adds Stachura letter. Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," diff by Mick Gold, 10:04, June 5, 2012, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&diff=prev&oldid=496086359.

[191]Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," Pageviews Analysis, https://pageviews.toolforge.org/?project=en.wikipedia.org&platform=all-access&agent=user&redirects=0&start=2015-07-01&end=2019-05-25&pages=Antony_Polonsky (accessed August 31, 2022). From July 2015 (earliest data available) until Icewhiz's edit on May 25, 2019, Polonsky's page was viewed 12,324 times.

[192]Icewhiz removes letter in May 2019: Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," diff by Icewhiz, 19:50, May 25, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&type=revision&diff=898765724&oldid=898765475 Volunteer Marek restores it. Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," diff by Volunteer Marek, 6:32, May 26, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&type=revision&diff=898837123&oldid=898765882. Icewhiz removes it again: Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," diff by Icewhiz, 9:00, May 26, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&type=revision&diff=898849403&oldid=898837123. Volunteer Marek restores it again: Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," diff by Volunteer Marek, 21:58, May 26, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&diff=next&oldid=898849403. Volunteer Marek removes both the Stachura AND Polonsky letters: Wikipedia article, "Antony Polonsky," diff by Volunteer Marek, 22:00, May 26, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&type=revision&diff=898940511&oldid=898940345.

[193]Antony Polonsky," 9:00, May 26, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Antony_Polonsky&diff=898849403&oldid=898837123.

living persons' that could cause 'harm to living subjects,' as well as self-published sources.[194]

Sometimes, instead of trying to discredit trustworthy scholarship, the distortionist group takes the easier route of misrepresenting it. In one case, the nationalist group misused a source to inflate the phenomenon of Poles returning looted Jewish property in the postwar period. It began with Tatzref, who added the following sentence to the article 'History of the Jews in Poland': 'Based on research into court records, Łukasz Krzyżanowski concludes that 'a relatively large number of properties' were returned.'[195] Tatzref misquoted Krzyżanowski, who had written in his essay that 'the possession, *and not ownership* [emphasis by authors], of relatively large number of properties was restored to the survivors of the Holocaust who returned to their places of origin.' Tatzref left out 'not ownership,' cherry-picking the essay to communicate the message that Jews successfully recovered their property in the postwar period. Indeed, the rest of Krzyżanowski's argument stated the exact reverse of Tatzref's claim, showing the monumental difficulty Jews faced in the postwar battle over their property as follows:

> Wishing to recover their estate, or that of their families, the Jews had to lead a battle with the regulations limiting the rights of people having no property and many other obstacles. Given the poverty of survivors, the mass flight of most of them from Poland, and the very complex situation in which so many Jewish properties found themselves after 1945, most of the recovered properties were immediately sold back to Poles. The quick sales were also in the interest of criminal gangs who specialized in taking over Jewish real estate. The cases of restitution of real estate considered by the [Polish] state as "abandoned" did nothing to change the general trend of Jewish property being transferred into non-Jewish hands. This phenomenon can be considered as the final part of the process of expropriation which had begun on Polish territory under the occupation and which continued after the war. The transfer of property, which had been initiated by the Germans and which continued after the liberation, was greeted with satisfaction by many Poles who had now become owners of Jewish property. This process was also favored by the communist authorities who wanted to create a homogenous and mono-ethnic state.[196]

Given the blatant manipulation of Krzyżanowski's argument, François Robere removed Tatzref's addition. François Robere cited Wikipedia's Biographies of Living Persons policy as justification,[197] reasoning that Tatzref's false portrayal of Krzyżanowski painted the scholar, to anyone familiar with the historical facts, as a Holocaust distortionist, and therefore risked harming his reputation.[198] The nationalist editors came pouring in to support Tatzref, and a two-week-long edit war ensued. A user called My very best wishes restored Tatzref's version, François Robere removed it, Piotrus restored it,

[194] "Wikipedia: Biographies of Living Persons," Wikipedia, revision from 14:04, July 19, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Biographies_of_living_persons&oldid=1099200134.

[195] Tatzref adds to the Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Tatzref, 19:38, May 14, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=897101152&oldid=896836543.

[196] Łukasz Krzyżanowski, "'Chcielibyśmy, by ten dom nie pozostał w obcych rękach.' Sądowa restytucja prywatnego mienia żydowskiego w Polsce na przykładzie Radomia i Kalisza 1945–1948," in Grabowski and Libionka (eds.), *Klucze i kasa*, pp. 605–6.

[197] François Robere removes it: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by François Robere, 22:08, May 14, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=897119187&oldid=897101152. See also Icewhiz's comment on this: "Talk:History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Icewhiz, 4:33, May 28, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=prev&oldid=897603480.

[198] "Wikipedia: Biographies of Living Persons," Wikipedia, revision from 14:04, July 19, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Biographies_of_living_persons&oldid=1099200134.

Icewhiz and François Robere replaced it with a more accurate summary of Krzyżanowski's writing, Volunteer Marek restored Tatzref's description, and François Robere removed it again. At this point, Icewhiz asked an administrator called El_C to step in and put an end to the edit war. El_C agreed to redact Krzyżanowski's name to prevent a Biographies of Living Persons policy violation but left in the false statement on most property being returned to Jews, saying, 'Sorry, I don't see the problem.' François Robere corrected the false claim, Volunteer Marek reverted once again, and K.e.coffman corrected it once more. Only then did the distortionist group stand down.[199]

Confronting distortionists

Many editors have tried to counter the revisionist group over the years, only to face a monumental struggle. Indeed, this topic area has become one of the most contested topics in all of Wikipedia. It is one of only three content areas on which the Arbitration Committee – the highest authority of administrators, elected by the community from among Wikipedia's most experienced editors – has placed a special set of restrictions on the entire topic, the other two being India-Pakistan and Israel-Palestine.[200] While most articles in Wikipedia can be edited by anyone, even people using an IP address instead of a login, articles under the 'extended confirmed' restriction require editors to

[199]My very best wishes restored Tatzref's manipulation: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by My very best wishes, 2:23, May 15, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=897144844&oldid=897119187. François Robere removed it: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by François Robere, 9:52, May 15, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=897184845&oldid=897166971. Piotrus restored it: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Piotrus, 5:48, May 16, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=897309776&oldid=897256560. Icewhiz explained the misrepresentation. "Talk:History of the Jews in Poland/Archive 6," comment by Icewhiz, 6:11, May 16, 2019, "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland/Archive_6&oldid=1039197765#Krzy%C5%BCanowski. Icewhiz and François Robere replaced distortion with a more accurate summary: Wikipedia article, "The History of the Jews in Poland," diff by François Robere, 17:53, May 16, 2019. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=897387764&oldid=897310688. Volunteer Marek restored old description: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Volunteer Marek, 14:56, May 17, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=897512334&oldid=897485012. François Robere removed it: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by François Robere, 21:05, May 17, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=897560332&oldid=897553745. Volunteer Marek restored it: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Volunteer Marek, 22:50, May 19, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=897875754&oldid=897875223. Icewhiz asked El_C to step in and El_C responded: "User talk:El C," Wikipedia, comments by Icewhiz, 4:01, May 20, 2019 and El_C, 16:46, May 20, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:El_C&oldid=898004473#BLP_vio_in_protected_page. El_C protected the page and redacted Krzyżanowski's name: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by El_C, 3:37, May 20, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=897906988 and Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by El_C, 16:45, May 20, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=897907231. François Robere corrected it: Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by François Robere, 19:29, June 3, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&diff=prev&oldid=900150262. Volunteer Marek reverted him. Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by Volunteer Marek, 20:26, June 3, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=900158147&oldid=900150262. K.e.coffman corrected it again. Wikipedia article, "History of the Jews in Poland," diff by K.e.coffman, 2:51, June 4, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=History_of_the_Jews_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=900200690&oldid=900164794.

[200]Wikipedia has 2,748 pages (as of August 5, 2022) under "extended confirmed" protection in a variety of topic areas, but only in the abovementioned three topic areas are all pages within that topic automatically eligible for protection. See "Category:Wikipedia extended-confirmed-protected pages," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Category:Wikipedia_extended-confirmed-protected_pages&oldid=1096054993. See also "Wikipedia:Protection policy," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Protection_policy&oldid=1107462649#Extended_confirmed_protection.

have a Wikipedia account that is more than 30 days old, and to have carried out more than 500 edits, before they can make any changes to an article about Poland's Jews. This level of page protection indicates the battlefield these topics have become. To quote one administrator, El_C, no other conflict on Wikipedia is so fraught, 'not WP: ARBPIA [Palestine-Israel], not WP:ARBIPA [India-Pakistan-Afghanistan], not WP: AP2 [American politics] … none of them comes close.'[201]

A formidable foe

Challenging the distortionists takes a monumental amount of time, more than most people can invest in a voluntary hobby. Few can compete with the hundreds of hours the nationalist-leaning editors spend on Wikipedia every year. In their most active year, Piotrus made 27,423 edits, followed by Xx236 (9,966), Volunteer Marek (9,450), MyMoloboaccount (5,598), Poeticbent (4,480), and GizzyCatBella (3,694).[202] These are staggering figures, considering 96 percent of Wikipedia editors make fewer than 1,200 edits annually.[203] Some of them are extremely veteran editors. Volunteer Marek has been editing since 2005;[204] Piotrus, an editor since 2004,[205] researchs Wikipedia for a living – he has identified himself as Piotr Konieczny, associate professor of Communications at Hanyang University in South Korea.[206] As such, both these editors have substantial social capital on Wikipedia, meaning they have gained many supporters among uninvolved administrators and editors, who come to their aid in times of need, as examples in this essay show. Moreover, the nationalist-leaning editors support one another; if one of them faces opposition, another comes to the rescue. By working in tandem with one another, the distortionist editors make it hard for anyone to challenge them. In one case in March 2021, Piotrus and Volunteer Marek worked together on the Wikipedia article about the IPN, purging criticism of that organization at a dizzying speed. In just four and a half hours, they made 39 changes, leaving other editors little chance to make sense of their edits, let alone revert them.[207]

[201] "Wikipedia:Reliable sources/Noticeboard/Archive 333," comment by El_C, 8:18, February 15, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Reliable_sources/Noticeboard/Archive_333&oldid=1017509906#Revisiting_WP:APLRS.

[202] MyMoloboaccount – 2,497 in 2011, but under his previous username, Molobo, he made 5,598 edits in 2006. XTools Top Edits, User: MyMoloboaccount, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/ec/en.wikipedia.org/MyMoloboaccount (accessed August 31, 2022); XTools Top Edits, User: Molobo, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/ec/en.wikipedia.org/Molobo (accessed August 31, 2022). Volunteer Marek – 9,450 in year 2017. XTools, Volunteer Marek, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/ec/en.wikipedia.org/Volunteer%20Marek (accessed August 31, 2022). Gizzycatbella – 3,694 in year 2021. XTools, GizzyCatBella, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/ec/en.wikipedia.org/GizzyCatBella (accessed August 31, 2022). Xx236 – 9,966 in 2016. XTools, Xx236, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/ec-yearcounts/en.wikipedia.org/Xx236 (accessed August 31, 2022). Piotrus – 27,423 in 2007. XTools, Piotrus, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/ec/en.wikipedia.org/Piotrus (accessed August 31, 2022). XTools, Poeticbent, https://xtools.wmflabs.org/ec/en.wikipedia.org/Poeticbent (accessed August 31, 2022).

[203] For 2021, see "Wikimedia Statistics: Editors: Filtered," https://stats.wikimedia.org/#/en.wikipedia.org/contributing/editors/normal|table|1-year|(editor_type)~user±activity_level~1..4-edits*5..24-edits*25..99-edits*100..-edits|monthly (accessed August 7, 2022), showing (if data over the year is averaged) that 95.9% of editors make less than 100 edits/month, or 1200 edits/year. For previous years, see "A relatively stable 10% of editors who make over 5 edits each month make over 100 edits," illustration by Apteva, July 5, 2013, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Statistics#/media/File:Percent_of_Active_English_Wikipedia_Editors_Who_Make_100_Edits.png (accessed August 7, 2022), showing that 90 percent of users made fewer than 1,200 per year.

[204] "User contributions for Volunteer Marek," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Contributions/Volunteer_Marek&dir=prev&target=Volunteer±Marek.

[205] "User contributions for Piotrus," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special:Contributions/Piotrus&dir=prev&target=Piotrus.

[206] "Piotr Konieczny," Hanyang University, http://professor.hanyang.ac.kr/pbk/index.do.

When the distortionist editors work in tandem, they simply outnumber their opponents. In theory, Wikipedia's content disagreements are not supposed to be decided on by numbers; policy explicitly states that 'Wikipedia is not a democracy; even when polls appear to be "votes," most decisions on Wikipedia are made on the basis of consensus, not on vote-counting or majority rule,'[208] and that 'consensus is determined by the quality of arguments (not by a simple counted majority).'[209] In reality, however, votes do count, and the opinion with the most votes usually wins.[210] To quote Buidhe, 'in practice, content is determined by what the bulk of editors working in a certain area want, rather than the balance of reliable sources.'[211] One example of this occurred in the Wikipedia article 'The Holocaust in Poland.' In August 2021, François Robere added three sentences in the article's postwar section, concerning a Polish restitution law passed that same month which hampered Holocaust survivors' ability to reclaim lost property.[212] Volunteer Marek promptly reverted the addition. In the talk-page discussion that ensued, François Robere created a Request for Comment, asking editors to weigh in on his proposed edit. Of the eighteen editors who showed up to voice an opinion, eleven voted no, including Piotrus ('[François Robere's edit] only outlines grievances of one side – the survivors'), Volunteer Marek ('Holocaust survivors['] … claims are completely unaffected by this or any other law'), Lembit Staan ('cherry picked'), GizzyCatBella ('does not belong to the article'), MyMoloboaccount ('present[s] an extreme POV [point of view]'), as well as Nihil novi and My very best wishes.[213] The no votes outnumbered the yes, dooming François Robere's attempt to add a short section on Holocaust restitution. Like so many others trying to oppose this group, he didn't stand a chance.

The distortionist editors appear to be communicating 'off-Wiki,' a term the Wikipedia community uses for contact outside the encyclopedia, for example through email or text message. Contacting like-minded editors in private is a generally frowned-upon practice, as some use it to disrupt the nonpartisan, open consensus-building process at the heart of Wikipedia's culture. When used to invite editors to sway consensus, off-Wiki contact is known as 'canvassing' or 'vote stacking.'[214] Although many editors communicate off-Wiki regardless, including for purely social purposes, some of the nationalist-leaning editors have a history of improper coordination off-Wiki. In 2009, Piotrus (then an

[207]"Talk:Institute of National Remembrance," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Institute_of_National_Remembrance&oldid=1100791296#Mass_removal_of_criticisms.

[208]"Wikipedia:Polling is not a substitute for discussion," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Polling_is_not_a_substitute_for_discussion&oldid=1092240419.

[209]"Wikipedia:Consensus," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Consensus&oldid=1102480480.

[210]Wikipedians have noted this. On this, see "Wikipedia: Of course it's voting," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Of_course_it%27s_voting&oldid=1082217562. Comments in this thread: "Wikipedia talk: Polling is not a substitute for discussion," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia_talk:Polling_is_not_a_substitute_for_discussion&oldid=1057108130. A "win" may also be a "no consensus" decision, which typically maintains the status quo prior to the discussion.

[211]Email interview with Buidhe from August-October 2021, archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish–Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

[212]Wikipedia article, "The Holocaust in Poland," diff by François Robere, 9:44, August 15, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Holocaust_in_Poland&diff=next&oldid=1033023687.

[213]"Talk:The Holocaust in Poland," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:The_Holocaust_in_Poland&oldid=1092871024#Survey.

[214]"Wikipedia:Canvassing," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Canvassing&oldid=1097292469, sections on stealth canvassing and vote-stacking.

administrator), Volunteer Marek, MyMoloboaccount, My very best wishes, Jacurek, Poeticbent, and others, were embroiled in a scandal known as the Eastern European Mailing List, in which members schemed to protect their narrative by supporting one another in disputes, reverting edits they disliked, and harassing opposed editors.[215] Despite the gravity of sanctions when this misconduct came to light – which included Piotrus losing his administrator status and both Piotrus and Volunteer Marek being temporarily banned from editing articles on Eastern Europe – email contact seemed to continue. In May 2018, for example, Piotrus asked GizzyCatBella to let him email her, explaining, 'there may be circumstances when people want to send you an 'eyes only' communique.'[216]

Inappropriate off-Wiki contact is hard to prove unless someone leaks documentation (as happened in the case of the Eastern European Mailing List), but the closeness of this group's edits raises suspicions of vote stacking and what Wikipedians call 'tag-team edit warring' (taking turns to revert changes opposed by like-minded editors). As pointed out by Ealdgyth, an editor who used to work in the topic area, 'It's amazing how quickly they all turn up together in the same articles.'[217] Piotrus's canvassing is beyond doubt: in 2021, he was caught trying to gather editors from the Polish Wikipedia to vote on a dispute in the English Wikipedia.[218]

The distortionists turn on one another only in the rarest of cases, when they realize they have a losing hand. In the abovementioned example of Nihil novi inserting Kurek into the article on the Jedwabne massacre, a new editor called ALevy at MOTJ logged a complaint on the 'Administrators' Noticeboard' (a page for contacting administrators). 'A user named Nihil novi … uploaded defamatory content to your website,' reported ALevy, asking for it to be removed.[219] Within less than 30 min, Volunteer Marek had deleted Nihil novi's mention of Kurek. 'I don't think [Kurek] can be considered an RS [reliable source],' he said, echoed by GizzyCatBella ('Agree') and Piotrus ('It would be best to cite others'), although the three of them had vigorously defended Kurek in the past.[220] In this particular case, the combination of Jedwabne's high visibility and a complaint from an outsider on the Administrators' Noticeboard made Nihil novi's edit too egregious for his colleagues to support. But this was an exception; for the most

[215]For a list of members in the EEML, see "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Eastern European mailing list," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Eastern_European_mailing_list&oldid=1079515313#List_membership. Volunteer Marek then went by Radeksz, MyMoloboaccount by Molobo, and My very best wishes as Biophys. Tymek, mentioned earlier in this essay, was also implicated. For a description of what they did, see "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Eastern European Mailing List," https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Eastern_European_mailing_list&oldid=1079515313#Improper_coordination. The contents of the off-wiki emails can be found here: http://file.wikileaks.org/file/wikipedia-cabal.zip.

[216]"User talk:GizzyCatBella," diff by Piotrus, 6:25, May 27, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:GizzyCatBella&diff=843149146&oldid=843149062#WP:EMAIL See also his (unsuccessful) request from editor E-960: "User talk:E-960," comment by E-960, 11:30, October 10, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:E-960&diff=863737791&oldid=863372391#WP:EMAIL.

[217]Interview with Ealdgyth, November 26, 2021, archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish – Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

[218]"Wikipedia:Administrators' noticeboard," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Administrators%27_noticeboard&oldid=1004638845#English_Wikipedia_user_using_alternate_account_to_call_Polish_Wikipedia_editors_to_Axis_Powers.

[219]"Wikipedia:Administrators' noticeboard," Wikipedia, comment by ALevy at MOTJ, 6:20, August 18, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Administrators%27_noticeboard&oldid=1039503340#Holocaust_conspiracies_on_your_website.

[220]Wikipedia article, "Jedwabne pogrom," diff by Volunteer Marek, 7:27, August 18, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jedwabne_pogrom&type=revision&diff=1039359422&oldid=1039337437.

part, the distortionist editors operate as a monolith and pose a formidable barrier to their opponents.

The 'Jan Żaryn' Wikipedia article illustrates the colossal amount of time it takes to even **try** to counter the group's distortions. Jan Żaryn, previously an IPN official and for a time, a member of the Senate sitting on behalf of the Law and Justice party, has made dubious public statements. Of Jedwabne, he has said that 'the Germans tr[ied] to force Poles to take part in these murders, which in most cases fail[ed] and if they [did] then only in passive form' and that 'everything [was] happening at the Germans' command.'[221] To explain the 1946 Kielce pogrom, Żaryn suggested the Jews were to blame when he wrote, 'a significant proportion of Jewish individuals either supported the communist authorities or else simply joined their ranks. Many worked … in censorship and propaganda, slandering the memory of the PPP [Polish underground state], the AK [Home Army], and deceitfully remaining silent about Soviet massacres. … This intensified anti-Semitic attitudes … [and] uncontrolled impulses toward the pogroms.'[222] Of the 1968 antisemitic campaign in Poland, which ended with the expulsion of 25,000 Jews from Poland, Żaryn wrote that the expellees included 'not only real communist criminals from the Stalinist regimes' – thus suggesting that a significant proportion were criminals – and accused the Jewish expellees of 'creating a black legend about the Nation.'[223] Żaryn has gone on record defending the Easter-time 'Judas ritual' performed by the residents of Pruchnik, a town in southeast Poland, which involved beating and burning an effigy of Judas Iscariot resembling an Orthodox Jew. When a Jewish–Polish journalist critiqued the ritual, Żaryn asked him 'not to interfere,' adding, 'He will understand himself when he becomes a Catholic.'[224]

For two years, Jan Żaryn's Wikipedia biography gave no indication of his fringe views. Written almost entirely by Piotrus, the biography presented Żaryn simply as a 'Polish historian and politician,' with a few dry facts about his career.[225] In April 2021, in an attempt to fix this, an editor called Mhorg added a paragraph noting Żaryn's praise for the ONR, his views on the Jedwabne massacre, and the fact that Polish newspapers described his statements as nationalist, antisemitic, and chauvinistic.[226] Three days later, Volunteer Marek deleted the entire paragraph, claiming Mhorg had 'turn[ed] the article into an attack page.'[227] On the talk page, François Robere and an editor called Szmenderowiecki

[221]Michał Szukała, "Prof. Jan Żaryn: Niemcy byli 'reżyserami' pogromów takich jak w Jedwabnem," *Dzieje.pl*, September 15, 2016, https://dzieje.pl/aktualnosci/prof-jan-zaryn-niemcy-byli-rezyserami-pogromow-takich-jak-w-jedwabnem (accessed August 8, 2022).

[222]Quoted in Kate Korycki, "Memory, Party Politics, and Post-Transition Space: The Case of Poland," *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 31, no. 3 (2017), p. 533.

[223]Piotr Pacewicz, "Jak się Żydów przeprasza, to po co ich obrażać – o uchwale senatora Żaryna (PiS) mówi prof. Osęka. Prawda o Marcu 1968," *OKO.press*, March 1, 2018, https://oko.press/sie-zydow-przeprasza-obrazac-o-uchwale-zaryna-pis-mowi-prof-oseka-prawda-o-marcu-1968/ (accessed August 31, 2022).

[224]Wiktoria Beczek, "Jan Żaryn w oblężonej twierdzy. Senator ma pretensje do Żydów, że zobaczyli antysemityzm," *Gazeta.pl*, April 24, 2019, https://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wiadomosci/7,114884,24695737,jan-zaryn-w-oblezonej-twierdzy-senator-ma-pretensje-do-zydow.html (accessed August 8, 2022).

[225]For the sanitized version of Żaryn's biography on the eve of Mhorg's additions, see Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," revision from 3:45, February 4, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&oldid=1004741791.

[226]Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," diff by Mhorg, 11:14, April 23, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&type=revision&diff=1019444951&oldid=1004741791.

[227]Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," diff by Volunteer Marek, 17:34, April 26, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&type=revision&diff=1020009653&oldid=1019444951 and "Talk:Jan Żaryn/Archive1," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 20:31, April 26, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn/Archive_1&oldid=1070448193#BLP_vio.

suggested multiple other ways to incorporate Żaryn's radical views and their reception, but Volunteer Marek[228] and Piotrus refused.[229] François Robere, Szmenderowiecki, and Mhorg kept working on the text,[230] and Volunteer Marek kept reverting so much and so fast that at one point, he accidentally reverted himself.[231] In June, Szmenderowiecki took Volunteer Marek's mass reversions to the Administrators' Noticeboard/Incidents, a page where editors can post urgent matters,[232] but nobody took any action. After still more back and forth in July, including a five-part Request for Comment by François Robere,[233] Lembit Staan and GizzyCatBella overhauled the entire article, simply removing the overwhelming majority of the journalists' and scholars' observations on Żaryn's extremism.[234] This, more or less, is how the article has remained since.[235] In other words, three months of Wikipedians' efforts came to nothing. Indeed, the current biography is even worse than the original sanitized version, when Żaryn's views were absent; now readers opening Jan Żaryn's page have access to his claims (for example, that Jews were to blame for the Kielce pogrom), without being told of their baselessness.

Editors who brave the distortionists contend with aggression, such as racist slurs, uncivil language, and mass deletions. Xx236 wrote in one talk page, 'This remainds [*sic*] me of the Lightbulb joke, how many Poles do you need to kill a Jew.' Jews couldn't be Poles, he insinuated when he wrote, 'Many Jews spoke poor Polish. You can't pretend to be Polish if you don't speak fluent Polish.'[236] In another talk page, he

[228]"Talk:Jan Żaryn/Archive1," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 20:24, May 27, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn/Archive_1&oldid=1070448193#Draft.

[229]"Talk:Jan Żaryn/Archive1," Wikipedia, comment by Piotrus, 3:15, May 28, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn/Archive_1&oldid=1070448193#Draft.

[230]Szmenderowiecki expanded the article with a translation of the Polish Wikipedia's version of Żaryn's biography, a task he worked on for hours and ran by both Piotrus and Volunteer Marek for their approval. "Jan Żaryn," diff by Szmenderowiecki, 2:21, June 7, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&type=revision&diff=1027282389&oldid=1026827527. "Talk:Jan Żaryn/Archive1," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 5:06, June 7, 2021 and by Piotrus, 6:16, June 7, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn/Archive_1&oldid=1070448193#RFC_on_Fran%C3%A7ois_Robere's_second_proposal:_Views_and_lead. Yet less than an hour after Szmenderowiecki had posted it, on June 7, 2021, Volunteer Marek reverted a tenth of it, including several sentences containing critical analysis. "Jan Żaryn," diff by Volunteer Marek, 5:03, June 7, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&type=revision&diff=1027302236&oldid=1027296309.

[231]Volunteer Marek reverted: Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," diff by Volunteer Marek, 14:44, June 15, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&type=revision&diff=1028704733&oldid=1028400885 François Robere restored: Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," diff by François Robere, 15:12, June 15, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&type=revision&diff=1028709184&oldid=1028704733. Volunteer Marek reverted: Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," diff by Volunteer Marek, 16:45, June 15, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&type=revision&diff=1028723543&oldid=1028709184. On June 18, François Robere and Volunteer Marek reverted one another repeatedly, with Volunteer Marek having the final word. For his self-revert, see Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," diff by Volunteer Marek 15:12, June 18, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&diff=1029212007&oldid=1029211796

[232]"Wikipedia:Administrators' noticeboard/IncidentArchive1070," Wikipedia,https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Administrators%27_noticeboard/IncidentArchive1070&oldid=1073176966#Disruptive_mass_deletion_behaviour.

[233]In late June and mid-to-late July, François Robere worked to address the concerns of Volunteer Marek, Piotrus, GizzyCatBella, and a user called Lembit Staan, so as to move toward a consensus, "Talk:Jan Żaryn," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn&oldid=1070448209#Resolving_disputes_one-by-one but the distortionist editors refused to budge. "Talk:Jan Żaryn," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn&oldid=1070448209#State_of_the_consensus_(all_sections). In late July he posted an RFC, "Talk:Jan Żaryn," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn&oldid=1070448209#RfC:_Jan_%C5%BBaryn.

[234]Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," dif by GizzyCatBella, 9:19, July 21, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&type=revision&diff=1034692965&oldid=1032704330&diffmode=source.

[235]Wikipedia article, "Jan Żaryn," Wikipedia, revision from 20:03, June 8, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jan_%C5%BBaryn&oldid=1092201491.

commented, '*Haaretz, Jerusakem [sic] Post*, JTA frequently publish lies.'[237] Piotrus wrote of the *Żydokomuna* myth that 'every great lie is based on a grain of truth.'[238]

Volunteer Marek, who has identified himself in the past as Radek Szulga,[239] associate professor of economics at Lyon College, resorts to offensive language as a matter of course. When disagreeing with other editors – in any topic area – he uses statements such as 'What the fuck. This is some pretty odious behavior,' 'Fuck. You.' 'go to fucking hell,' 'this fucking asshole,' 'Oh ffs [for fuck's sake],' 'fucked up POV [point of view],' 'it's utter horseshit,' 'basically a cluster fuck,' 'stop making shit up and writing nonsense,' 'Gimme a fucking break Francois' 'For. Fucks. Sake!' 'Go screw yourself,' 'you fucking sleazeball,' 'sleazy weasel,' 'You have got to be shitting me,' 'complete bullshit,' 'Please. Stop. Lying,' and 'I've pointed this out to you *several times* … please get that through your thick computer screen.'[240] Aside from breaching Wikipedia's requirement for civility,[241] such language repels from the topic area anyone but the most thick-skinned editor. To quote Buidhe, 'VM's [Volunteer Marek's] editing [is] exercising a veto over content in a particular article and endlessly debating it until I give up and move on to a different article.'[242] K.e.coffman reached similar conclusions, writing, 'VM has behaved in an aggressive and belittling manner towards others, using article TPs [talk

[236]"Talk:Collaboration with the Axis powers/Archive 7," Wikipedia, comment by Xx236, 10:44, March 27, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Collaboration_with_the_Axis_powers/Archive_7&oldid=1064750421#Grabowski. Xx236 was eventually banned. "User talk: Xx236/Archive 6," Wikipedia, "Topic ban from topics on Poland," revision from 6:18, March 25, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:Xx236/Archive_6&oldid=1079138552.

[237]"Talk:Marek Jan Chodakiewicz," Wikipedia, comment by Xx236, 12:43, May 22, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Marek_Jan_Chodakiewicz&oldid=1093727061#Michlic's_view.

[238]"Talk:Żydokomuna/Archive 1," Wikipedia, comment by Piotrus, 1:31, April 4, 2007, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:%C5%BBydokomuna/Archive_1&oldid=1089900863#Scope.

[239]Previously went by the username Radeksz. He revealed his own identity here: "Wikipedia talk:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Eastern European mailing list/Proposed decision," diff by Volunteer Marek, 10:00, December 8, 2009, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia_talk:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Eastern_European_mailing_list/Proposed_decision&diff=prev&oldid=330431416.

[240]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," diff by Volunteer Marek, 8:03, June 2, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case&diff=899921948&oldid=899921941. "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," diff by Volunteer Marek, 7:35, June 2, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case&diff=899919573&oldid=899919091. "Talk:Jared Taylor/Archive 2," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 18:59, September 26, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jared_Taylor/Archive_2&oldid=1079703699#!votes. "Talk:Jan Żaryn/Archive1," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 5:39, June 8, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn/Archive_1&oldid=1070448193#RFC_on_Fran%C3%A7ois_Robere's_second_proposal:_Views_and_lead."Talk:Koniuchy massacre/Archive3," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 18:50, November 15, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Koniuchy_massacre/Archive_3&oldid=914543764#Religious_prejudice. "Talk:Koniuchy massacre/Archive3," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 20:21, November 21, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Koniuchy_massacre/Archive_3&oldid=914543764#Another_false_edit_summary_by_Icewhiz._Another_false_and_nonsensical_accusation_of_BLP_vio_by_Icewhiz._While_he_commits_BLP_vio_himself. "Talk:Home Army/Archive 4," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 22:12, May 2, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Home_Army/Archive_4&oldid=1091452685#AK_units_hunting_down_groups. "Wikipedia:Conflict of interest/Noticeboard/Archive 181," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek 23:21, November 27, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Conflict_of_interest/Noticeboard/Archive_181&oldid=1064391779. "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," diff by Volunteer Marek, 8:33, June 2, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case&diff=899925262&oldid=899924946. "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," diff by Volunteer Marek, 8:03, June 2, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case&diff=899921948&oldid=899921941. "User talk:Volunteer Marek," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 15:47, August 3, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:Volunteer_Marek&oldid=1036971518#SPI. "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive248," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive248&oldid=1079521824#Statement_by_VM. "Talk:Naliboki_massacre," Wikipedia, comments by Volunteer Marek, 13:48, March 15, and 05:22, March 18, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Naliboki_massacre&oldid=1026103883.

[241]"Wikipedia:Civility," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Civility&oldid=1103800060.

pages]/edit summaries to accuse them of: lying; being hysterical; edit warring/dishonesty; holding consensus hostage/sabotaging productive dialog; being offended by sources positive towards Poland; and losing it.'[243] Volunteer Marek often prefers to protect his colleagues' edits and purge changes made by other editors, than to add new material. In Chodakiewicz's biography, Volunteer made 37 edits, 36 of them deletions, including removal of critiques made by Michlic and Piotr Wróbel.[244] In the Jan Żaryn case, out of Volunteer Marek's 38 edits to the article, 30 were deletions.[245] To quote François Robere's description of the battlefield approach of Volunteer Marek and his colleagues,

> Some editors were throwing accusations from the get go, but actually contributing to the text? Expanding it? Finding sources? Suggesting alternatives? Translating? Helping the [editors who are] newbies? That's a whole different thing, and much harder to do than just fling accusations.[246]

The distortionist group has driven off editor after editor, wearing down anyone who tries to fix or expand articles on Polish–Jewish relations. Testimonies abound from editors who gave up on editing in the area, because they had no more time or energy to fight. Ealdgyth wrote about

> … the sheer tiredness that the entire topic area … elicits in me. It's a cesspit of battleground behavior. … About a year ago, it got so bad, I just totally removed ALL the articles in the topic area from my watchlist, except for the main Holocaust article. … Until folks wake up to the tag teaming and battleground behavior and grasp the nettle to eliminate the folks doing that behavior, it's never going to get better.[247]

Ermenrich, another editor who did some work on Polish–Jewish relations, echoed her point. 'I was also driven away from editing this topic area,' Ermenrich wrote, adding, 'Many editors want nothing to do with it. In fact, I would go so far as to say that the actors [Piotrus and Volunteer Marek] … basically control the topic area.'[248] Buidhe felt similarly, stating,

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[242]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement," Wikipedia, comment by Buidhe, 16:36, February 3, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement&oldid=1004641070#Volunteer_Marek.

[243]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism in Poland/Evidence," Wikipedia, comment by K.e.coffman, 14:53, 19 June 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism_in_Poland/Evidence#Evidence_presented_by_K.e.coffman.

[244]XTools Top Edits, Article: Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, User: Volunteer Marek, (accessed September 2, 2022), https://xtools.wmflabs.org/topedits/en.wikipedia.org/Volunteer%20Marek/0/Marek%20Jan%20Chodakiewicz. For his truncation of Wrobel's critique, see Wikipedia article, "Marek Jan Chodakiewicz," diff by Volunteer Marek, 16:30, June 3, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?diff=844240775. For his deletion of Michlic's comments, see Wikipedia article, "Marek Jan Chodakiewicz," diff by Volunteer Marek, 16:33, June 3, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?diff=844241059, Wikipedia article, "Marek Jan Chodakiewicz," diff by Volunteer Marek, 15:19, May 17, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?diff=897514897, and Wikipedia article, "Marek Jan Chodakiewicz," diff by Volunteer Marek, 23:15, May 19, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?diff=897878105.

[245]Sigma Tool User Contribution Search for Username:Volunteer Marek, Page: Jan Żaryn, https://sigma.toolforge.org/usersearch.py?name=Volunteer+Marek&page=Jan+%C5%BBaryn&server=enwiki&max= (accessed August 31, 2022). See similar findings in XTools Top Edits, User: Volunteer Marek, Article: Jan Żaryn, (accessed August 31, 2022), https://xtools.wmflabs.org/topedits/en.wikipedia.org/Volunteer%20Marek/0/Jan%20%C5%BBaryn (accessed June 21, 2022), demonstrating that Volunteer Marek deleted 39,593 bytes, 48 times what he added.

[246]"Talk:Jan Żaryn," Wikipedia, comment by François Robere, 13:38, July 21, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Jan_%C5%BBaryn&oldid=1070448209#State_of_the_consensus_(all_sections).

[247]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Clarification and Amendment," Wikipedia, comment by Ealdgyth, 20:35, August 4, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia%3AArbitration%2FRequests%2FClarification_and_Amendment&oldid=1037381224#Statement_by_Ealdgyth.

[248]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by Ermenrich, 15:42, December 24, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=1064847441#Statement_by_Ermenrich

> I decided to quit editing articles about Polish Jewish history as I found it was a waste of time … the editors doing the deleting [of my edits] were fundamentally not interested in writing an encyclopedia based on mainstream views in Holocaust studies.[249]

Editor SlimVirgin, for a time active in the topic area, simply gave up on trying to fix articles on the Holocaust, reasoning, 'it would be a battle and it's just not worth it.'[250] By January 2022, an observer summarized that 'many editors in very good standing such as Ealdgyth, Buidhe, François Robere and SlimVirgin have been driven away from this topic area … there aren't that many experienced editors left.' Another observer wrote, 'I was not thrilled by Piotrus's WP:BLUDGEONing [practice of forcing a point of view] … I think that is a main reason why so many editors have fled from the topic area.'[251]

The role of administrators

In theory, Wikipedia has a way of dealing with editors who violate its rules. And the distortionist editors commit any number of violations: they misrepresent sources, purposely use unreliable sources or no sources at all, violate Biographies of Living Persons rules, canvass, hound, and push nonmainstream points of view.[252] These violations are all sanctionable, meaning that the community, with enough support, can vote to place sanctions on those who commit them. Furthermore, articles relating to Eastern Europe fall under a policy called 'Discretionary Sanctions,' which enables any administrator to place immediate sanctions on an editor who violates these policies.[253] Sanctions include interaction bans (prohibiting an editor from interacting with one or more editors); article bans (prohibiting an editor from editing a specific page); topic bans (prohibiting an editor from editing any page relating to a particular topic); and blocks (technically preventing an editor from editing). Most severely, editors may face site bans (prohibiting them from editing anything on Wikipedia).[254]

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[249]Email interview with Buidhe from August–October 2021, archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish–Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

[250]"User talk:DGG," Wikipedia, comment by SarahSV, 1:49, February 11, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:DGG&oldid=1102519260#AE_comment.

[251]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by Robby.is.on, 12:21, December 24, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=1064847441#Statement_by_Robby.is.on and "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by CaptainEek, 23:05, January 2, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=1064847441#Piotrus

[252]"Wikipedia:Disruptive editing," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Disruptive_editing&oldid=1104615337. "Wikipedia:Arbitration Committee/Discretionary sanctions," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration_Committee/Discretionary_sanctions&oldid=1097295729. "Wikipedia:List of policies and guidelines," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:List_of_policies_and_guidelines&oldid=1104298248. "Wikipedia:Harassment," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Harassment&oldid=1101984590.

[253]Number of admins "Wikipedia:List of administrators," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:List_of_administrators&oldid=1104931138. Discretionary sanctions in E.E. "Wikipedia:Requests for arbitration/Eastern Europe," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Requests_for_arbitration/Eastern_Europe&oldid=1089441938#Standard_discretionary_sanctions. On discretionary sanctions in general, "Wikipedia:Arbitration Committee/Discretionary sanctions," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration_Committee/Discretionary_sanctions&oldid=1097295729#Sanctions.

[254]"Wikipedia:Editing restrictions," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Editing_restrictions&oldid=1104883091. Wikipedia uses the term "indefinite," but when an editor is indefinitely banned, they may usually still appeal their ban after a certain period of time.

Sometimes the system works, as when GizzyCatBella was topic-banned in June 2018 for falsifying information in the 'Stawiski' article. As mentioned above, Poeticbent first inserted unverified statements on Jewish militia deporting Poles from Stawiski in 2011, wrongly referenced to an essay by Rossino.[255] In March 2018, Icewhiz tried to correct the false text, rightly pointing out that the referenced works did not actually contain the information attributed to them.[256] But in June 2018, GizzyCatBella reverted back to Poeticbent's version, claiming that was the more 'sourced and stable version.'[257] Icewhiz then warned her, 'I strongly suggest you self revert … [this] highly defamatory and counter-factual information,'[258] and when GizzyCatBella still refused, he reported her to Arbitration Enforcement, citing several more of her views, such as supporting Mark Paul and Ewa Kurek.[259] Administrators read the supporting evidence and saw the distortion clearly. The administrator Sandstein wrote the following:

> GizzyCatBella removes an apparently reliably sourced mention of an anti-Jewish pogrom in WWII Poland. Instead, GizzyCatBella ascribes a 1939 deportation of "ethnic Polish families" to "Jewish communists" and "Jewish militia". I'm by no means knowledgeable about the history of this place and period, but this strikes me as very surprising to say the least, and would need very good sourcing. Instead, Icewhiz appears to be correct that Rossino, the source cited by GizzyCatBella … does not appear to mention anything of the sort … I suspect that GizzyCatBella is using Wikipedia for anti-semitic propaganda by misrepresenting sources.

GizzyCatBella's colleagues protested vigorously; Piotrus stated, 'I don't see what is really actionable here' and 'Kurek is an academic and is not unreliable per se,' Volunteer Marek helpfully added 'just read the freakin' source,' and MyMoloboaccount and My very best wishes lent their support as well.[260] Despite the outpour of defense, the administrators in this case concluded that GizzyCatBella had been in the wrong, and topic-banned her. The ban forbade her from editing anything related to World War II Poland, including Jewish–Polish history just before, during, and just after the war (although she would later return to edit the topic area, as we show below).[261]

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[255] In 2013, and again in 2015, two editors tried to change the wrong claims in Stawiski, but Poeticbent reverted them, calling their changes "fringe findings." See Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by 76.109.192.170, 2:27, March 7, 2013, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&diff=prev&oldid=542495837. Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by Poeticbent, 4:41, March 12, 2013, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&diff=next&oldid=542495837. Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by Ben Ami Polania, 16:21, April 16, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&diff=next&oldid=632433798. Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by Poeticbent, 16:41, April 17, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&diff=next&oldid=656911065. Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by Poeticbent, 18:48, April 16, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&diff=next&oldid=656777970.

[256] Relying on The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life Before and During the Holocaust, Icewhiz rewrote the paragraph about the persecution of Stawiski's Jews, pointing out that Jewish shops were "looted by Germans and Poles" and that in the German-instigated pogrom, "Polish locals wield[ing] iron bars murdered some 300 Jews." Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by Icewhiz, 21:25, March 19, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&diff=next&oldid=797458339.

[257] Wikipedia article, "Stawiski," diff by GizzyCatBella, 9:12, June 24, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Stawiski&type=revision&diff=847297861&oldid=846042386.

[258] "Talk:Stawiski," Wikipedia, comment by Icewhiz, 9:30, June 24, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Talk:Stawiski&oldid=903227286#Recent_edits.

[259] "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement," Wikipedia, comments by Icewhiz, 11:45, June 24, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement&oldid=847499513#GizzyCatBella.

[260] "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement," Wikipedia, comments by Sandstein, 13:27, June 24, 2018, Piotrus, 5:03 and 7:26, June 25, 2018, Volunteer Marek, 21:25, June 24, 2018, MyMoloboaccount, 19:42, June 24, 2018, My very best wishes, 19:38, June 24, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement&oldid=847499513#GizzyCatBella.

In many other cases, however, distortionist editors receive light or no sanctions, because administrators don't do the homework it takes to recognize distortion. The topic area of Polish–Jewish relations constitutes a difficult one to adjudicate, especially considering administrators (all volunteers) have no historical training and lack the time or patience to sift through sources. Few wish to navigate the bitter fights between editors in this area, described by one administrator as 'a sack of ferrets fighting tooth and claw.'[262] Arbitrator BarKeep49 testified, 'this is one of the hardest areas we have to admin on Wikipedia.'[263] El_C, an administrator, wrote, 'I can tell you that resolving WP:APL [Wikipedia's Antisemitism in Poland] disputes … is, to put it mildly, exceptionally challenging.'[264] For administrator Ymblanter, the stress of dealing with editors in the topic area spiked their blood pressure. 'I do not want to get to a hospital again,' Ymblanter stated in the wake of one particularly unpleasant case concerning GizzyCatBella and Volunteer Marek.[265]

Some administrators refuse even to investigate violations in articles on Polish–Jewish relations, claiming that to do so would go against the principle that administrators should rule over conduct issues, never content. Wikipedia advises administrators to 'avoid issuing opinions on content' and rather 'stick to the user conduct.' Wikipedia's Arbitration Committee 'is for *user conduct* disputes, and never for making decisions on *article content* [emphasis in original].'[266] Some conduct issues, however, necessarily overlap with content, above all misrepresentation, unreliable sourcing, BLP violations, or non-neutral writing, so in principle, administrators should weigh in on these matters. Yet, in the topic area of Polish–Jewish history, where ruling on such infractions requires heavy reading, administrators often prefer to dismiss conduct issues as content disputes. For example, in February 2019, the Arbitration Enforcement Noticeboard received a report accusing Tatzref of unreliable sourcing, plagiarism, and pushing a nonmainstream point of view, including copying sentences from Mark Paul to claim that Jews had a quick and easy time reclaiming their property at the end of the war. Had the administrators juxtaposed Tatzref's sentences to Mark Paul's writing, they would have seen the plagiarism easily;[267] had they checked Mark Paul's publisher, they would also have realized the source's unreliability. Instead, the administrators pleaded 'content dispute' and Tatzref got away scot-free. 'I lean towards dismissing [the complaint against Tatzref] with no

[261]"User talk:GizzyCatBella," Wikipedia, diff by Sandstein, 20:06, June 25, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:GizzyCatBella&diff=prev&oldid=847500344.

[262]"User talk:Jimbo Wales/Archive 238," Wikipedia, comment by Guy, 21:53, October 2, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:Jimbo_Wales/Archive_238&oldid=1031646035#$0.02.

[263]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by Barkeep49, 17:10, December 22, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=1064847441#Warsaw_concentration_camp:_Arbitrators'_opinion_on_hearing_this_matter_%3C5/4/0%3E.

[264]Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by El_C, 18:22, January 4, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=1064847441#Warsaw_concentration_camp:_Arbitrators'_opinion_on_hearing_this_matter_%3C5/4/0%3E.

[265]"Wikipedia:Administrators' noticeboard/Incidents," Wikipedia, comment by Ymblanter, 20:32, August 3, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Administrators%27_noticeboard/Incidents&oldid=1036994009#Ymblanter's_blocks_of_Volunteer_Marek_and_GCB. See also "User talk:Ymblanter/2021," Wikipedia, comment by Ymblanter, 21:20, August 3, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:Ymblanter/2021&oldid=1073318120#ANI_discussion_regarding_your_blocks_of_GCB_and_Marek.

[266]"Wikipedia:Administrators' guide/Dealing with disputes," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Administrators%27_guide/Dealing_with_disputes. On ArbCom, see also "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Guide to arbitration," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Guide_to_arbitration&oldid=1084152859#Expertise.

[267]See footnote 170 above.

action because I'm not able to untangle it from the content dispute from which it stems,' stated the administrator Sandstein. '[This] is effectively a content dispute,' agreed Tony-Ballioni and GoldenRing, two other administrators. The three voted to take no action on Tatzref's editing.[268] The same occurred when Szmenderowiecki alerted administrators that Volunteer Marek, Lembit Staan, and GizzyCatBella were whitewashing Jan Żaryn's biography on Wikipedia. An administrator called Drmies responded, 'complaint is highly specific, content-oriented, and requires way too much digging,' and dropped the case several hours later.[269] When an editor called Levivich reported Volunteer Marek's use of unreliable sources (in another topic area), an administrator countered, 'I can not, and will not, read each and every source to verify.'[270]

Cases abound of administrators turning down requests for involvement on content dispute grounds instead of following the evidence. When Icewhiz reported Volunteer Marek to the Arbitration Enforcement Noticeboard for, among other things, calling Christopher Browning's work 'garbage,' the administrator, GoldenRing, claimed it all boiled down to a content dispute they couldn't easily adjudicate, because no 'uninvolved admin is going to have a sufficient view of this subject to be able to judge which is right.'[271] The administrators in this case therefore imposed a three-month topic ban on both parties equally. When El_C received the complaint on the distortion of Krzyżanowski's argument, he responded, 'Sorry, I don't have any immediate plans on getting further involved … because it involves parsing the historiographical consensus from a lot of material that I am scarcely familiar with.'[272] Editors anxious to fix Wikipedia's distortion have noted the risk of dismissing disputes this way, which results in continued manipulations. To quote Ealdgyth, 'Our system for solving disputes … has utterly failed at solving this one. And it's not surprising … [when] a chunk of them instantly go 'but this is a content dispute so we can't rule on that." Ealdgyth concluded, 'to get someone sanctioned for source misrepresentation on Wiki is one of the single hardest things you can do. I tried to do it in the Polish Jewish case.'[273]

Buidhe came to the same conclusion when she stated, 'the arbitration and dispute resolution processes are best at dealing with clear-cut abuse such as name calling, harassment, and so forth. They don't deal as well with more subtle forms of abuse such as selectively picking sources (even unreliable ones) that align with a particular narrative while dismissing others. In theory, this is a form of point-of-view-pushing (which is not allowed) but is more often treated as a content dispute rather than a form of

[268]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive248," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive248&oldid=1079521824#Tatzref.

[269]"Wikipedia:Administrators' noticeboard/IncidentArchive1070," Wikipedia, comment by Drmies, 16:05, June 20, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Administrators%27_noticeboard/IncidentArchive1070&oldid=1073176966#Disruptive_mass_deletion_behaviour. Drmies's last comment was at 22:54 that same day.

[270]"Wikipedia:Administrative action review," diff by Dennis Brown, 15:38, July 15, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=1098383100&diff=1098384070.

[271]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive238," Wikipedia, comment by GoldenRing, 19:26, July 5, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive238&oldid=851411653#Result_concerning_Volunteer_Marek.

[272]"User talk:El C," Wikipedia, comment by El_C, 19:10, May 20, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:El_C&oldid=898004473#BLP_vio_in_protected_page.

[273]Interview with Ealdgyth, November 26, 2021, archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish-Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

abuse. Therefore, both perspectives are treated as equally legitimate even if one of them is much better supported by reliable sources.'[274]

Even when administrators try to adjudicate on content-related infractions, they often misunderstand the subject matter or condemn the wrong editor. One dramatic instance of administrators completely missing the mark occurred in summer 2019. Icewhiz presented evidence of multiple falsifications to the Arbitration Committee, including Poeticbent's aforementioned insertion of the so-called welcome banner in Białystok, and the fallacies concerning Jewish militias at Stawiski and Radziłów. Icewhiz asked for sanctions against Volunteer Marek, who had both restored the Jewish militia story in the 'Radziłów' article, and defended content borrowed from Mark Paul in the 'History of the Jews in Poland' article.[275] The Arbitration Committee gave this case little attention, tied up as they were with another case (called Fram) taking place at the same time. Only six arbitrators weighed in on the Poland case, compared to nine on the Fram case. As one arbitrator, Joe Roe, admitted three years later, 'At the time, we were all focused on Fram and the 'Antisemitism in Poland' case was on the back burner … I was trying to get through it very quickly.'[276] Moreover, the arbitrators had no expertise in Polish history and little sense of who was in the right. One arbitrator called Opabinia regalis disclosed, 'I find these source-heavy cases difficult when I don't know anything about the topic.'[277] She would go on to be one of the two 'drafting arbitrators' in the case, responsible for sifting through the evidence and preparing a proposed decision for the other arbitrators to vote on. It did not help that Icewhiz laid out his complaints in a condensed fashion, constrained by the committee's strict word limit. For instance. to make his point on the misleading 'welcome banner,' he wrote a rather cryptic, heavily hyperlinked statement:

> Jewish Welcoming: commons, wiki1, wiki2. Citation doesn't support. Polish/English mismatch. Contradicted by: sign's text, image composition, source. fixedCommons(+on-wiki!).

Unsurprisingly, the arbitrators had no idea what they were looking at.

The 2019 Arbitration Committee case ended dismally for defenders of historical accuracy. Instead of sanctioning Volunteer Marek for restoring unreliable sources and defending misrepresentations of sources, the administrators accused Icewhiz himself of distortion. Absurdly, they charged him with BLP violations for saying that Ewa Kurek had an 'outlandish interpretation' of the ghettos and that her work was 'questionable from historical and moral points of view,' blind to the fact that these were correct statements based on secondary sources.[278] The arbitrators also claimed that Icewhiz

[274]Email interview with Buidhe from August-October 2021, archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish – Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

[275]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism in Poland/Evidence," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism_in_Poland/Evidence&oldid=917192115#Evidence_presented_by_Icewhiz.

[276]Interview with Joe Roe from June 28, 2022, archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish – Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405. His term as arbitrator was January 2019 to December 2020.

[277]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism in Poland," Wikipedia, comment by Opabinia, 8:06, June 7, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism_in_Poland&oldid=1098984142#Arbitrators'_opinions_on_hearing_this_matter_(6/0/0).

[278]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism in Poland/Proposed decision," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism_in_Poland/Proposed_decision&oldid=917197036#BLP_violations. Icewhiz's edits on Kurek are here: Wikipedia article, "Ewa Kurek," diff by Icewhiz, 13:31, May 16,

had made an 'ethnically derogatory comment' simply by using the word 'Polocaust' to describe Piotrowski's argument, not realizing that Polish revisionists use this term to assert the equivalence between Polish and Jewish victimhood, and scholars use it to describe such revisionism.[279] As a result of their skewed understanding, the arbitrators not only missed the manipulations taking place before their very eyes, but topic-banned Icewhiz. The Arbitration Committee also topic-banned Volunteer Marek for his hounding, battleground behavior, and name-calling, but not for his manipulations of article content. As Volunteer Marek himself would comment a year later, 'Essentially, the committee did not find anything wrong with my edits.'[280] Volunteer Marek successfully appealed his ban fourteen months later, and resumed editing freely in the topic area, while Icewhiz was indefinitely site-banned (prevented from editing any article, talk page, or noticeboard) on the charge of off-Wiki harassment of other editors.[281]

The summer 2019 case, which had the potential to address the systemic problem in the entire topic area, instead set the tone for enabling history distortion. In the words of editor Paul Siebert, the Arbitration Committee's decision allowed 'ignoring the cases when minor or even major misinterpretations of sources are committed.'[282] The committee's only helpful ruling in that case was a new source restriction, which required editors working on antisemitism in Poland to use exclusively 'peer-reviewed scholarly journals and academically focused books by reputable publishers.'[283] To quote SlimVirgin,

> the sourcing remedy was the one good thing to have come out of that case. Look at the sourcing in The Holocaust in Poland [article] in January 2018 […] museum websites, Basic Books, Stackpole Books, Jewish Virtual Library, Aish.com, American Jewish Committee, jewishgen.org, thoughtco.com, h-net.org, internationalresearchcenter.org, polacyizydzi.com, and so on. And really, this was one of the better articles in the area.[284]

Administrators have sanctioned the wrong editors more than once. In January 2021, Volunteer Marek – who had just finished serving his fourteen-month-long topic ban[285] – violated the sourcing requirements set by the Arbitration Committee in summer 2019. He restored several non-scholarly sources to the article 'The Holocaust in Poland,' including the work of Mark Paul, by then discredited by the aforementioned July 2019

2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ewa_Kurek&diff=prev&oldid=841541215 and Wikipedia article, "Ewa Kurek," diff by Icewhiz, 5:55, May 21, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ewa_Kurek&diff=next&oldid=842244150.

[279]For an example of revisionists using it, see "Polish minister says backs idea to create 'Polocaust' museum," *Reuters*, February 20, 2018 (accessed August 17, 2022), https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-poland/polish-minister-says-backs-idea-to-create-polocaust-museum-idUSKCN1G42F6. For an example of scholars commenting on it, see Jelena Subotić, *Yellow Star, Red Star Holocaust Remembrance after Communism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020), p. 206.

[280]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Clarification and Amendment," Wikipedia, comment by Volunteer Marek, 1:20, December 13, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=994893759#Statement_by_Volunteer_Marek.

[281]"Wikipedia:Arbitration Committee/Noticeboard/Archive 12," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration_Committee/Noticeboard/Archive_12&oldid=1079526719#Icewhiz_banned.

[282]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism in Poland," Wikipedia, comment by Paul Siebert, 20:13, June 2, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism_in_Poland&oldid=1098984142#Statement_by_Paul_Siebert.

[283]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism in Poland/Proposed decision," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case/Antisemitism_in_Poland/Proposed_decision&oldid=917197036#Specific-article_sourcing_restrictions.

[284]"User talk:DGG," Wikipedia, comment by SarahSV (SlimVirgin) 19:43, February 10, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=User_talk:DGG&oldid=1109116436#AE_comment

[285]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Clarification and Amendment," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=994893759#Antisemitism_in_Poland:_Motion.

Request for Comment.[286] Buidhe reported Volunteer Marek to Arbitration Enforcement, pointing out that when she reverted his edits to get rid of Mark Paul and other unreliable references, he reverted them back in again. Despite Volunteer Marek's obvious misconduct, the administrators at Arbitration Enforcement voted 5:1 to excuse him. They cited procedural grounds, claiming that Buidhe should have engaged more with Volunteer Marek on the article's Talk Page, and only then have filed the complaint.[287] Indeed, this case ended with Buidhe receiving a warning for **her** behavior.[288]

Editors commenting on the case were appalled at the outcome, pointing out that it would discourage others from reporting infractions. Ealdgyth proclaimed, 'warning Buidhe without even trying to see if VM [Volunteer Marek] violated the sourcing restrictions in place shows that no one is ever going to actually enforce these sourcing restrictions,' concluding, 'it's not worth it for other editors to even try to clean up this area.' Levivich agreed, saying,

> it hurts the encyclopedia to let someone get away with a source restriction violation because of how the complaint was raised. It's like we're allowing readers to read content that doesn't comply with V [Wikipedia's verifiability requirement of using reliable sources] because Buidhe didn't volunteer to spend more time trying to convince VM that VM violated the source restriction.

For similar reasons, François Robere stopped going to Arbitration Enforcement to report infractions, later explaining, 'AE hasn't proved effective, so people don't file there anymore.'[289]

In addition to sanctioning the wrong editors, administrators have made the error of lifting rightly placed bans. Such was the case with GizzyCatBella, banned in June 2018 for insisting on restoring false information in the 'Stawiski' article. In late 2020, various editors took GizzyCatBella to Arbitration Enforcement with evidence that she had violated her topic ban, meaning that she had made edits related to wartime Poland or to Polish Jews during and immediately before or after the war.[290] Instead of escalating her sanction, however, the administrators on Arbitration Enforcement lifted the ban entirely, apparently tired of dealing with complaints against her. As one

[286]Footnote 196 here: Wikipedia article, "The Holocaust in Poland," diff by Volunteer Marek, 6:21, January 29, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=The_Holocaust_in_Poland&type=revision&diff=1003492068&oldid=1003486926#cite_note-197.

[287]Johnuniq voted to accept Buidhe's filing and topic ban Volunteer Marek; Swarm voted to reject Buidhe's motion. Thryduulf, Black Kite and El_C voted to reject the motion and issue a warning to Buidhe not to repeat such conduct; Zero voted to reject the motion and warn both Buidhe and Volunteer Marek; Guerillero and DGG abstained.

[288]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement&oldid=1004641070#Volunteer_Marek.

[289]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by François Robere, 19:18, January 5, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=1064847441#Statement_by_Fran%C3%A7ois_Robere.

[290]See the evidence offered by François Robere in "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive264," Wikipedia, comment by François Robere, 1:47, April 5, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive264&oldid=1086489293#Request_concerning_GizzyCatBella, especially link 21. See evidence given by K.e.coffman on Prosto z mostu in "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive266," Wikipedia, comment by K.e.coffman, 6:18, May 5, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive266&oldid=961924403#Statement_by_involved_editor_K.e.coffman. See the first diff provided by Notrium in "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive268," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive268&oldid=967121527#GizzyCatBella. See evidence provided by Astral Leap (later declared an Icewhiz sock), especially link 110, in "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276&oldid=1093732413#GizzyCatBella.

administrator, El_C, justified his decision, 'this ban is (still) producing more heat than light, and … in the interest of everyone's collective time here at AE, it ought to be waived.' Another, Guerillero, used the same rationale when commenting that 'the topic ban … is causing more disruption than it is preventing.'[291] Several editors tried to persuade administrators that lifting her ban would be a mistake; one editor pointed out that she had just made an edit linking 'Aryanization' to affirmative action,[292] while another remarked, 'if Guerillero's logic was extended to the RW [real world], then all a convicted prisoner would have to do to be released is to make an absolute nuisance of themselves.'[293] But the administrators did not seem to care. That same month, the Arbitration Committee also lifted the topic ban they had placed on Volunteer Marek a year earlier. In their reasoning for lifting the ban, the arbitrators mostly ignored Volunteer Marek's past conduct in the topic area, suggesting the ban had never been justified in the first place. An arbitrator called Worm That Turned wrote, 'I am willing to concede [the ban] is no longer (and perhaps was never) needed.' El_C predicted, falsely as it turned out, 'I don't think there's any indication that Volunteer Marek is likely to edit disruptively in the topic area.'[294]

One indication of the mistakes made by administrators is that some have come to regret not taking a stronger stand. Take the arbitrator Joe Roe, who voted to ignore the distortions presented in the 2019 Arbitration Committee case, and then voted in 2020 to lift Volunteer Marek's topic ban. 'This was not our finest hour; there was a general lack of discussion,' he admitted in an interview in 2022, adding, 'With some distance, I realize that … the Holocaust in Poland case has real-world significance … I definitely spent a lot more time thinking about this after the case was closed.'[295] El_C expressed similar misgivings. He had supported lifting both GizzyCatBella's and Volunteer Marek's topic bans in December 2020,[296] defended Volunteer Marek when Buidhe reported him in January 2021,[297] and imposed only a mild sanction on Piotrus in

[291] El_C: "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276," Wikipedia, comment by El_C, 23:06, December 1, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276&oldid=1093732413#Result_concerning_GizzyCatBella Guerillero: "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276," Wikipedia, comment by Guerillero, 14:11, December 4, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276&oldid=1093732413#Result_of_the_appeal.

[292] Pointed out by Astral Leap, later declared an Icewhiz sock. "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276," Wikipedia, comment by Astral Leap, 12:44, December 4, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276&oldid=1093732413#Statement_by_Astral_Leap. "Affirmative Action," diff by GizzyCatBella, 15:49, September 17, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Affirmative_action&diff=978897567&oldid=978890314 for insertion of "Aryanization" in "Affirmative Action" article, referenced in "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276&oldid=1093732413#GizzyCatBella. When a previous editor, Zezen, did this (Wikipedia article, "Affirmative Action," diff by Zezen, 14:48, September 17, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Affirmative_action&diff=978889540&oldid=978889141), they were blocked: "Wikipedia:Administrators' noticeboard/Archive325," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Administrators%27_noticeboard/Archive325&oldid=1073175305#User:Zezen.

[293] "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276," Wikipedia, comment by Beyond My Ken, 22:04, December 4, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276&oldid=1093732413#Statement_by_Beyond_My_Ken_3.

[294] "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Clarification and Amendment," Wikipedia, comment by El_C, 5:17, December 13, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=994893759#Statement_by_El_C.

[295] Interview with Joe Roe from June 28, 2022, archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish – Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.

[296] For his support of lifting GizzyCatBella's topic ban, see "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276," Wikipedia, comment by El_C, 19:23, December 1, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive276&oldid=1093732413#Result_concerning_GizzyCatBella. For his support of lifting Volunteer Marek's topic ban, see "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Clarification and Amendment," Wikipedia,

February 2021 for canvassing votes among editors in the Polish-language Wikipedia.[298] El_C gradually came to realize the errors he had made. In December 2021, he called his leniency toward GizzyCatBella, Volunteer Marek, and Piotrus 'the greatest blunder of my Wikipedia career bar none.' He apologized for not placing stronger sanctions, especially on Volunteer Marek. 'Sorry,' he wrote. 'Honestly, I was a bit overwhelmed at the time and I just wanted to avoid dealing with a gauntlet that would be time and energy consuming … probably should have just left it to someone else.'[299]

To add to all these factors, Icewhiz himself may have strengthened the hand of the distortionists. Icewhiz made important edits on Holocaust-related topics and exposed the falsifications in the 'Warsaw concentration camp' article to *Haaretz*. Since his indefinite ban, however, he has apparently taken to mass socking, meaning he defies the ban by creating multiple accounts.[300] Though some of these socks have made valuable edits,[301] sockpuppetry as a whole games the system and erodes trust among editors. In this contested topic area, it does even more harm, as it enables the distortionist group to write off every editor who opposes them as an Icewhiz sock or delegate. Piotrus hinted at Szmenderowiecki being an Icewhiz sock,[302] and MyMoloboaccount accused Levivich and François Robere of being 'editors proxying for him [Icewhiz],'[303] while Volunteer Marek called them Icewhiz's 'meatpuppets,' a term used to refer to a Wikipedian who is being directed by another editor.[304] Edits challenging the nationalist narrative are in this way easily dismissed. To quote Ealdgyth,

> Right now, what you have is basically a bunch of editors who blame all problems on Icewhiz … battling the 'hordes of sockpuppets' of Icewhiz as well as trying to eliminate all sign of letting any of his edits (or any edits that they think MIGHT be his …) remain in the encyclopedia.[305]

comment by El_C, 5:17, December 13, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=994893759#Statement_by_El_C.

[297]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive280," Wikipedia, comments by El_C, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Enforcement/Archive280&oldid=1033156042#Volunteer_Marek.

[298]"Wikipedia:Administrators' noticeboard," Wikipedia, comment by El_C, 15:27, February 1, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Administrators%27_noticeboard&oldid=1004638845#English_Wikipedia_user_using_alternate_account_to_call_Polish_Wikipedia_editors_to_Axis_Powers. See El_C's comment on "very mild sanction."

[299]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by El_C, 11:52, December 22, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case&oldid=1064847441#Statement_by_El_C.

[300]"Wikipedia:Sockpuppet investigations/Icewhiz/Archive," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Sockpuppet_investigations/Icewhiz/Archive&oldid=1104566618.

[301]For example, Bob not snob inserted *Gazeta Wyborcza* as a source proving Muszyński's controversial claims. "Wojciech Muszyński," diff by Bob not snob, 07:47, 8 February 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wojciech_Muszy%C5%84ski&type=revision&diff=1005553326&oldid=1005520946.

[302]When Szmenderowieczki first joined, weighing in on Jan Żaryn, Piotrus leveled a thinly veiled accusation at him, saying, "I have to say that you display an amazing level of competency on intricate Wiki rules and politics, given that you started editing just a few months ago."

[303]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by MyMoloboaccount, 12:03, December 26, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case&oldid=1064847441#Statement_by_MyMoloboaccount.

[304]"Wikipedia:Conflict of interest/Noticeboard," diff by Volunteer Marek, 16:42, November 27, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Conflict_of_interest/Noticeboard&diff=1057435153&oldid=1057420364&diffmode=source.

[305]"Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Clarification and Amendment," Wikipedia, comment by Ealdgyth, 20:35, August 4, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Clarification_and_Amendment&oldid=1037381224#Statement_by_Ealdgyth.

One observer commented sarcastically, 'Everyone who disagrees with me is a sock puppet of, or a proxy editor for, a banned user [Icewhiz].'[306] Levivich expressed the same idea when he described the distortionists' mode of operation:

> So the pattern is: edit war; when consensus wins, come back later and try to remove it again, edit warring if necessary; when there are talk page discussions, bludgeon them; accuse anyone disagreeing with you of proxying for Icewhiz … ; rinse, repeat.[307]

For every distortion reported to administrators, countless other manipulations of history go completely under the radar. Most of the harmful editing activity takes place quietly, without anyone noticing or objecting. For example, from autumn 2020 to the following summer, Wikipedia's article on the Gdańsk-based 'Museum of the World War II' mentioned the criticism, leveled by the media and historians, of the museum's recent emphasis on the victimization of ethnic Poles. In August 2021, Volunteer Marek quietly removed it.[308] In July 2020, Piotrus purged a well-sourced paragraph on Poland's 2018 Holocaust Law from the Wikipedia article 'Historical Negationism,' claiming that none of the sources used the exact phrase 'historical negationism.'[309] The text was restored soon after, on the grounds that the sources in the paragraph used terms such as 'denial' and 'denialism,' synonymous with 'negationism,'[310] but Volunteer Marek deleted it once more in November 2021, this time without anyone noticing.[311] A similar deletion took place in the article on Rajgród, a town in northeast Poland. Since summer 2018, the article had detailed the annihilation of most of the town's 600 Jews and the collaboration of ethnic Poles with the Nazi SS. In June 2022, GizzyCatBella deleted that information, unchallenged by anyone in the Wikipedia community.[312]

Conclusion

This essay has shown that in the last decade, a handful of editors have been steering Wikipedia's narrative on Holocaust history away from sound, evidence-driven research, toward a skewed version of events touted by right-wing Polish groups. Wikipedia's articles on Jewish topics, especially on Polish–Jewish history before, during, and after World War II, contain and bolster harmful stereotypes and fallacies. Our study provides numerous examples, but many more exist. We have shown how the distortionist editors add false content and use unreliable sources or misrepresent legitimate ones. We have also demonstrated that when it comes to this group, Wikipedia's administrators have

[306] "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," diff by Vaulter, 19:48, December 26, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia%3AArbitration%2FRequests%2FCase&type=revision&diff=1062171120&oldid=1062161765

[307] "Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case," Wikipedia, comment by Levivich, 4:02, January 6, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wikipedia:Arbitration/Requests/Case&oldid=1064847441#Statement_by_Levivich.

[308] Wikipedia article, "Museum of the Second World War," diff by Volunteer Marek, 8:35, August 1, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Museum_of_the_Second_World_War&type=revision&diff=1036553526&oldid=1027317711. Text originally inserted by Buidhe in October 2020: https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Museum_of_the_Second_World_War&type=revision&diff=984442113&oldid=970495146.

[309] Wikipedia article, "Historical negationism," diff by Piotrus, 1:20, July 10, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Historical_negationism&type=revision&diff=966922360&oldid=966770109.

[310] "Historical negationism," diff by Blarix, 15:38, August 10, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Historical_negationism&type=revision&diff=972169626&oldid=968954296.

[311] "Historical negationism," diff by Volunteer Marek, 15:38, November 10, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Historical_negationism&type=revision&diff=1054529433&oldid=1054019401.

[312] "Rajgród," diff by GizzyCatBella, 7:06, June 14, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rajgr%C3%B3d&diff=prev&oldid=1093048032. Text originally inserted by Icewhiz in July 2018.

largely failed to uphold Wikipedia's policies, especially those requiring verifiability and civility.

Wikipedia's weakness has already been picked up on by the Polish government, as shown by a leaked email exchange between the Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki's advisors concerning the Hebrew-language Wikipedia. On March 6, 2018, at the height of the diplomatic crisis between Israel and Poland over the Holocaust Law, the prime minister's advisor wrote to the chief of staff that

> Ms. Joanna Hofman (our former ambassador in Helsinki) is a very sensible person and she understands the situation. I asked her to find someone who could start to position the Israeli sites in Google and to correct the Hebrew entries in Wikipedia. We need to be super discreet on this score, and she (Hofman) is aware of that … she will need a larger budget to cover this expense. It can be arranged if the Foreign Office allocates more money.[313]

While nothing ties the distortionist editors described in this study to the Polish government, this email exchange suggests that Wikipedia's inadequate safeguards will encourage state-sponsored agents to enter the scene, as has already happened in other cases.[314]

The encyclopedia's tremendous visibility makes correcting this trend an urgent task, and there are ways to work toward a better future in Wikipedia's treatment of the Holocaust. Existing editors should pay this problem more attention, especially those with advanced privileges, meaning administrators and arbitrators. The situation requires that they respond more seriously to the misrepresentation of sources and the use of substandard sources, as well as the abusive behaviors of long-time users. Tolerance toward distortion causes widespread harm, since Wikipedia has a profound effect on what people know and think. As Wikipedia itself says, 'anything you do here can have real-world consequences.' Editors are feeding the world a wrong view of the Holocaust and antisemitism.

It would also behoove the Wikimedia Foundation to look into the wide-scale distortion on the English Wikipedia, as it did recently in the case of the Croatian Wikipedia.[315] The crisis there bore striking similarities to the problems plaguing this topic area. An external expert retained by the Wikimedia Foundation found in their investigation of Croatian Wikipedia,

> Many articles created and edited by the members of this group present the views that match political and socio-cultural positions advocated by a loosely connected group of Croatian radical right political parties and ultra-conservative populist movements. The group has been using its positions of power to attract new like-minded contributors, silence and ban dissenters, manipulate community elections and subvert Wikipedia's and the broader movement's native conflict resolution mechanisms.[316]

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[313]See Jan Grabowski, "Leaked Emails Show How the Polish Government Tried to Rewrite Holocaust History," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, August 11, 2022, https://wyborcza.pl/7,173236,28781144,leaked-emails-show-how-the-polish-government-tried-to-rewrite.html (accessed August 30, 2022).

[314]Poland wouldn't be the first country to influence Wikipedia content; Russia did this in the Russian Wikipedia in 2014, surrounding the crash of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17. Matthew Sparkes, "Russian Government Edits Wikipedia on Flight MH17," *The Telegraph*, July 18, 2014, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/10977082/Russian-government-edits-Wikipedia-on-flight-MH17.html (accessed August 30, 2022).

[315]"Croatian Wikipedia Disinformation Assessment-2021," Wikipedia, https://meta.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=Croatian_Wikipedia_Disinformation_Assessment-2021&oldid=23197794.

[316]"The Case of Croatian Wikipedia: Encyclopaedia of Knowledge or Encyclopaedia for the Nation?" Wikimedia, https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/14/Croatian_WP_Disinformation_Assessment_-_Final_Report_EN.pdf.

The foundation's interest and involvement sparked the Croatian-speaking community to reorganize and pursue actions, a change that has resulted in tangible improvements.

The Wikimedia Foundation would do well to consider the Polish–Jewish case as well. When asked by us whether they would consider that, the Foundation responded, 'Through our Trust and Safety Disinformation team we remain at hand to assist the community on escalated cases that they believe requires our involvement and intervention,' while stressing, 'We primarily step in when a matter has been escalated to us by the volunteers themselves for support or when a particular community does not have sufficient oversight procedures to address a matter.'[317] Should the foundation look into this topic area, they will find that the English Wikipedia community, including the Arbitration Committee, has been unable to deal with the issue of persistent distortion of this topic, to the point that Wikipedia's articles in this topic have become a hub of misinformation and antisemitic canards.

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[317]Email interview with Helen Platt from the Wikimedia Foundation, September 1, 2022, archived in Klein, Shira, 2022, Data from: Wikipedia's Intentional Warping of Polish–Jewish History, Chapman University Digital Commons, https://doi.org/10.36837/chapman.000405.